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ABSTRACT

This guide contains 55 articles written by adult basic education (ABE) practitioners in Pennsylvania suggesting ways to improve teaching and program administration in the field. The guide is organized into four parts: (1) working together for program improvement, (2) teaching and learning, (3) developing as a professional and (4) appendixes (high school equivalency test centers in Pennsylvania, writers' names and addresses, publishers of ABE curriculum resources, glossaries of terms and organizations, and abbreviations, and an index). Following are representative titles of articles contained in the handbook: "Adult Education in Pennsylvania: A Process for Improving Teaching and Learning" (Cheryl Keenan); "The Importance of Accurate Data Reporting" (Kelly Limeul); "Where Do Volunteers Fit In?" (Regina Cooper); "Learner-centered Adult Education" (Jean L. Fleschute, Lois Zinn); "Research-based Strategies for Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities" (Mary Ann Corley); "An Overview of Learner Assessment" (Lori A. Forlizzi); "Learning with Computers" (Arlene Cianelli); Peer Mentoring: Students Helping Students" (Sue Snider); "Adult Basic Skills and Workplace Education" (Michelle Joyce); "Recognizing Learners' Success" (John Mihota); "Professional Development Is Directly Tied to Program Improvement" (Helen Hall); "Graduate Programs in Adult Education" (Trenton R. Ferro); "Professional Development through Training Modules" (Carol Molek); "Online Staff Development Tools" (KayLynn Hamilton, Debra Burrows); and "The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL)" (John P. Comings). (KC)

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The Pennsylvania ABLE Staff Handbook

1998 EDITION

A guide for teachers, tutors, counselors, and others working with adult learners in programs of Literacy, Adult Basic Education, GED Preparation, English as a Second Language, Family Literacy, and Workplace Education in Pennsylvania

Tana Reiff, Editor

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1998 EDITION

Tana Reiff, Editor

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This book is a result of a project developed by Project AXIS, Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13, with support from the U.S. Department of Education through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education; however, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, or Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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From the Director of the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education

Adult education in Pennsylvania: a process for improving teaching and learning

by Cheryl Keenan

Practicing adult education in Pennsylvania has rewards and responsibilities. A successful teaching and learning environment that assists adult learners to move forward in their lives and accomplish their goals keeps adult education practitioners coming back to their classrooms every year. Along with the rewards are the responsibilities to learners that instruction is relevant to their goals, that learning is taking place, and that their limited time is well used. This represents the truest form of accountability—the accountability that exists between practitioner and learner.

Pennsylvania adult educators are signing on to another major responsibility: the obligation to continually improve adult education services and enhance the accountability between every practitioner and learner. Although Educational Quality for Adult Education (EQUAL), Pennsylvania's program improvement initiative, started at the state level, it is rooted in local practitioners joining program administrators to create improvements in their agencies that affect teaching and learning. In this sense, EQUAL is a melding of state-level and grassroots efforts to systematically improve learner outcomes and increase accountability to learners, communities, businesses, and funders of adult education.

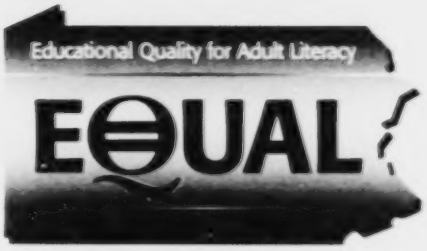
As of program year 1997-98, 82 adult education agencies in Pennsylvania were participating in Project EQUAL. That translates into approximately 200 adult educators practicing the basic concepts involved in continuous improvement, including administrative and program decision making based on data collected and discussed by program improvement teams. By the end of 1999, all adult education programs in the Commonwealth will be using the EQUAL process to continually improve their adult education services.

GROWTH OF IMPROVEMENT

During the first years of EQUAL, 20 pilot agencies helped to develop a program improvement process that is beneficial to each type of adult education setting in the Commonwealth. Regardless of whether a program is large or small, is rural or urban, or uses professional or volunteer staff, the program improvement process fits each program's needs. During the fourth year of EQUAL, a formal training system was implemented that helps EQUAL agencies to develop program improvement teams, collect and analyze program and learner information, and conduct self-assessments in areas related to learner assessment, curriculum, instruction, and other areas.

As a result of the EQUAL experience, many lessons and observations are apparent. The overwhelming success of the initiative is due to direct practitioner participation in program improvement activities. Ownership by practitioners of the program improvement process and a view that it is valuable to them and their learners quickly replaces skepticism about what EQUAL is "going to do to us." Even the most seasoned practitioners have acknowledged the value of EQUAL in assisting them to make improvements in areas they had previously assumed were working.

Initially, practitioners who enter the



EQUAL training process express feelings of uneasiness about what "program improvement" really means and why they should participate. Some participants have expressed confusion about "what the Bureau really wants." Over time, participants begin to talk about how they feel connected to a bigger picture, thereby overcoming some of the isolation associated with teaching in adult education. They enjoy meeting with program improvement teams from other agencies and can relate to questions raised by other practitioners. They enjoy having access to other adult educators who have been involved in EQUAL and to EQUAL Training and Implementation Teams. Eventually the suspicion of a "hidden agenda" is replaced with an understanding of their own agenda for improvement.

ALL ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING

The heart of program improvement is related to teaching and learning. As practitioners become proficient in looking at the information about teaching and learning that they have collected, they focus attention on how to determine if learners are indeed learning. Many improvement inquiries are centered on learner assessment and have resulted in agencies realigning assessment policies so that assessment is seen as a valuable tool to the practitioner and

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KEENAN *Continued from page 3*

learner rather than something that is "done for the state."

In turn, the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, through its Professional Development System, offers training opportunities designed to improve assessment practices in adult education because practitioners have expressed that need through the program improvement process. In this way, practitioners are helping to shape what is offered in professional development to support local continuous improvement needs.

When practitioners are involved in identifying areas for program improvement, many discuss their concerns about learners who leave their classrooms prematurely. In the beginning of the process of using data to investigate perceived issues, they pose questions about retention and how they can improve retention rates in their programs. Sometimes the focus of the investigation is on the circumstances external to learning environment or events happening in the learner's life. Over time, many of these questions shift to a focus on what is happening in the learning environment that affects the learner's desire to persist. By making changes in instruction, such as changing procedures for providing feedback to learners about their progress, agencies have improved retention rates.

Over time, participants begin to talk about how they feel connected to a bigger picture, thereby overcoming some of the isolation associated with teaching in adult education.

Being in the world of overworked and underpaid adult educators, there is always concern about "doing one more thing." Practitioners who have been involved in program improvement teams understand that the value of continually improving is critical to the most important level of accountability: accountability to their learners. To these practitioners, collecting and using data to inform change is not "something else to do," but rather a critical element of teaching and learning.■

WHAT STAFF NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT HOW THE FUNDING WORKS

by Jeffrey C. Woodyard

Program administrators spend a great deal of time managing funding from a variety of sources. Administrators provide instructional and support staff with the resources, supplies, technology, and training that they need to do their jobs. The more staff understand the differences among the funding agencies, the more likely it is that they will under-stand some of the reasons that administrators make the funding and operating decisions that they do. With that in mind, listed below are just a few essentials that staff should know about program funding.

- **Funding cycles are different.** Agencies that receive funding from a variety of sources often have programs that have different beginning and ending dates. Different programs within the same agency may be operating under different fiscal years and different payment cycles as well. Having a signed contract is not the same as having cash on hand to start program services. Some programs may be unable to offer programming until they receive payment from their funding sources. As a result, program service start-up dates may vary from year to year.

- **Funding reporting requirements vary.** It would be so easy if each funding source asked for the same type of information on each of your students. Staff are sometimes asked to collect and report data that they feel is redundant or not relevant to their job task.

- **Funding is data driven.** The measurable outcomes that you as instructional and support staff supply to administration are crucial. Staff who are aware of the connection between reporting valid data and the increased funding opportunities that this data might present on both national and state levels are more likely to appreciate the constant requests made by administrators for impact data, pre- and post-testing, competencies attainment, and societal changes in their learners.

- **Funding agencies place restrictions on spending.** You can spend restricted dollars only on allowable expenses. However, some staff are not aware of these restrictions and the spending guidelines placed on programs. Most funding agencies have spending limits for such categories as administration and support services. The biggest expenses for most programs are salaries and benefits.

- **Funding sources may require in-kind services.** In-kind items are goods or services that are not purchased directly by the program; however, the program receives the benefits derived from these goods or services. An example is the free use classroom or office space. Staff may be asked to keep records of in-kind services, such as travel, supplies, and textbooks, that they provide to the program.

These are just a few of the areas that affect staff as administrators attempt to provide program services and accountability for its learner and its funding sources. Staff are encouraged to talk to their administrators about how funding from a variety of sources affects their job functions.■

Becoming a 'learning organization'

by JoAnn Weinberger and Sandra Choukroun

As staff of adult basic and literacy education programs, you consider the goals of your learners and the requirements of funders. You are quality-conscious. You may have heard the terms "learning organization" or "high-performance workplace," but think of them in the context of business or industry.

Adult education is a business! So it's critical for literacy agencies to find a business-like way of analyzing their operations in order to identify what factors make them successful. You may be saying, "We already do that. We have reports, spreadsheets, and data. What more can we do?" The idea of a "learning organization" is that every staff member shares in an ongoing process of setting goals, collecting information about day-to-day activities, raising questions based on the information, sharing results, and changing the way things are done.

The Center for Literacy (CFL) changed a fundamental part of its operation through knowledge about itself. CFL serves over 2,800 students a year. Recruiting and retaining learners has a direct impact on our success rate; it is critical that intake procedures result in as many committed new learners as possible—who will stay in programs as long as necessary to meet their goals. Using staff time as efficiently as possible is also important. For many years, new enrollees were given individual interviews with staff. While this personalized approach was very positive, it met only two of the four essential goals of the intake process: recording demographic information and conducting assessment. There was neither enough time to describe the broad range of CFL services nor a smooth way to match learners with appropriate programs.

As a result of this review, the director of educational services and the area coordinators devised two-hour group orientation meetings for new learners in each of CFL's four geographic areas. During these biweekly meetings learners receive an overview of all CFL programs in their areas, complete the CFL demographic intake form (with assistance from staff if necessary), participate in a planning conference interview, and take the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) locator test. When they leave, they are given assigned to a particular class or tutoring program. The new system has resulted in key improvements: the immediate learner drop-out rate is lower and more learners are being served since they feel better about their program choice decisions.

STEPS TO IMPROVEMENT

Your organization can make use of the valuable information that is hiding within it. In other words, yours can become a "learning organization." Are you already doing any of the following?

- Collecting and analyzing information about daily activities is as much a part of everyone's job as teaching, managing, coordinating, and planning. The key questions are: *How much? How many? Why? When? What can we do about it?*
- Staff members share information throughout the organization. Teams report information to each other and to management frequently, with time allotted for discussion and follow-up. Key information is routinely shared through all levels of the organization; staff are trained to understand and use the data.
- Staff members take roles of mentors or coaches whenever necessary to support the learning process. They collaborate effectively, both individually and in teams.
- Innovation and creativity are highly valued in the organization. People are comfortable with new ways of doing things and are not stuck to old, bureaucratic ways. Flexibility and change are fundamental to organizational culture.
- "Systems thinking" is basic. Staff are accustomed to looking for patterns in information.
- Systems are in place which propel the organization forward, such as ways of assessing learners' progress, developing curriculum, and incorporating key instructional techniques.
- Staff members value quality and understand how it reflects the needs of learners and the community.

CFL has been experiencing the impact of becoming a learning organization. One key effort is EQUAL, in which agencies statewide are examining ABLE-funded programs to develop maximum effectiveness. CFL's cross-functional Program Improvement Team is identifying areas for positive change.

In response to the "Work First" instructional model necessitated by welfare reform, CFL's adult literacy educators are learning to adapt the workforce literacy curricula and instructional techniques to traditional adult basic education classes and tutoring.

As part of the What Works Literacy Partnership, a three-year project linking outstanding adult literacy programs in the United States, CFL is documenting program impact and then sharing information with the other partners. Ten classes are involved in this project, with staff and learners providing input.

By participating in the Oregon Tutor Program Accountability System-Assessment Instruction and Mastery (AIM) Project, CFL is working to determine the most effective assessment instrument to use with low-level learners.

For adult education providers, competitive effectiveness emerges out of issues such as recruitment and retention, assessment, curriculum and instruction, and staff development. What kinds of information can we collect, analyze, and share in order to make the hard decisions needed for our businesses to grow? Can we nudge our programs' cultures into accepting the flexibility and change which are increasingly essential for all organizations? Will we capture the best of each staff member, board member, and volunteer to enrich our missions? As organizations whose service is learning, we already understand the tremendous potential of education. Now it is up to us to apply it as "learning organizations," so we can deliver the programs that our adult learners are counting on.

RECOMMENDED READING

Marquardt, Michael. (1997). "16 Steps to Becoming a Learning Organization." *Info-line* Issue 9602. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.■

Program improvement teams that work

by Karen Mundie

A program improvement team is simply a group of people working together to make positive changes in the functioning of an organization.

The team's mission is to examine program data and then to implement changes suggested by that data. This approach precludes decision-making based on intuition and hunches; the team does not rush to solve hazily understood problems.

The life cycle of a program improvement team is arbitrary. While some might finish a task and disassemble, in an organization of sufficient energy, an improvement team can become an institution, with new members replacing those lost through attrition or fatigue. When improvement teams become an integral, ongoing part of an organization, then that organization can be said to be in a process of continuous program improvement.

WHY IS A TEAM IMPORTANT TO A PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS?

Even with the best will, most of us over time become habituated and complacent about our work and about our programs. When we are forced to test our complacency against both the data generated by our programs and the way that data is interpreted by others, we see our programs in a new way. As a team, we now understand where the problems really are, and, working as a team, we are able to put together solutions that are specific to the problems identified.

WHO SHOULD BE ON THE TEAM?

Improvement teams should include staff with a range of job descriptions, including both administrators and direct service practitioners (teachers, tutors, support staff). Key full-time people should be included—those whose day-to-day work and leadership have a profound impact on the stability and quality of a program. Since most of the key people are already overextended, they may be reluctant to volunteer for something that will take away time from work that they know is important for the organization. They need to be assigned. That frees them to consider program improvement as a high priority, part of their work responsibility.

After this core group is established, ask for volunteers to round out the team, especially part-time teachers or volunteer tutors. In our field some of the most talented and creative practitioners are often narrowly focused part-timers who view their work as having little to do with the larger organization. ABLE programs rely on them but are frustrated because they are always in short supply and the turnover is high, causing programs to lose valuable experience and to spend an inordinate amount of time hiring and training.

A program-improvement team must be empowered not just to examine the program closely, but to act, to experiment, to tinker, to engage in real dialogues that result in change.

High staff turnover is a problem that programs cannot work on effectively without input from the part-timers or volunteers themselves—though, of course, we continue to try to do so. It's structurally much easier and cheaper to tell part-timers what to do in a day-long training, a summer institute, or even a memo than it is to learn from them or have them learn from each other. Though including part-timers and volunteers in program improvement teams may be difficult logistically, it is very important. Programs that exclude the point of view of those with the most direct contact with students end up improving only administrative processes, assessment, and reporting. They will touch only lightly the heart of the program—the teaching of students.

HOW DOES THE TEAM KEEP THE REST OF THE STAFF (AND THE VOLUNTEERS) INVOLVED?

Communication is the most serious problem in any organization, but it is especially difficult in the kind of decentralized settings so common to our field. Class sites are spread out all over a city, county, or several counties, and the teachers or tutors work on varied schedules and in many settings.

Nevertheless, adjunct team members—the rest of the staff and volunteers—must feel included in the team's processes. This can be done in a number of ways. Team reports can become standard agenda items at staff meetings. Team minutes can take the form of a brief newsletter to be circulated throughout the organization. This newsletter can also be included as an attachment to other newsletters that circulate widely to tutors or part-time staff. Areas of the program which will be up for scrutiny in team meetings should be announced and input requested from other interested staff members. Team members can gather information for the team through calls to tutors or teachers. New processes developed through team meetings can be presented for comment before changes are made.

HOW CAN WE KEEP THE TEAM MOTIVATED?

People are motivated when they see positive results from their work.

A program improvement team must be empowered not just to examine the program closely, but to act, to experiment, to tinker, to engage in real dialogues that result in change. A program improvement team that has to ask for permission to make any adaptations will rapidly become cynical. Once team members are made to feel that their decisions can be easily overruled, they will not take responsibility for following through on the changes they suggest. When this happens, the agency's program improvement plan will become just another document filed in a drawer at the PDE.

When administrators and practitioners work as a team, the buck can't and doesn't stop anywhere. Nor should it. Problems are owned by the group and so are the solutions. Empowered staffs, like empowered students, can accomplish great things.■

The importance of accurate data reporting

by Kelly Limeul

As a teacher, I feel gratified when my students learn how to write an essay, gain self-esteem, are able to help their children with homework, or advocate for themselves around a community issue. Data reporting does not give me that same satisfaction, but it can confirm the work that I do and show that our program is a success. Most important, it can determine whether our organization is achieving its mission.

To establish an accurate data reporting process, an organization needs to think about these questions: *What is quality data? Why collect and analyze data? Who benefits from accurate data reporting? How do outcomes affect the program improvement process?*

WHAT IS QUALITY DATA?

Quality data collection includes quantitative and qualitative information. To explain the difference between these two, I will discuss Tony, a student at my organization. Quantitative information was collected on Tony using an intake form, standardized test results, and attendance records. From these items, we learned that Tony is an unemployed, 19-year old black male, a welfare recipient, who lives in the neighborhood we serve. He dropped out of school in the tenth grade. Standardized tests were administered to Tony when he entered the program. On the math portion of the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), he scored at the beginning of the fifth-grade level, and he received a 48 on the Literature and the Arts section of the Official GED Practice Test. Sign-in sheets indicate that on average, Tony attends class 21 hours a month.

Qualitative information was gathered on Tony from his individualized educational plan, action plan, progress notes, dialogue journal, the special events that he attended, group discussions, and case management sessions. This information I find to be the most valuable because it tells me who my students really are. Progress notes document Tony's academic work-in-progress, goals, interests, growth in self-confidence, change in attitude, and social and emotional needs. In his dialogue journal, Tony wrote about being a single father raising a nine-month old son. He talked about the bonding he experiences when he reads to his child, something his parents did not do for him.

WHY COLLECT AND ANALYZE DATA?

Quality data reporting can confirm that your organization is accomplishing its goals, and it can help to identify the areas for program improvement.

External stakeholders include funders, other agencies, and the community. Funders want to know that their money is having an impact and being spent as agreed upon. Positive outcomes often result in continued or even expanded funding for the program, which benefits the surrounding community. Internal stakeholders include the board, the staff, and the clients. Accurate data reporting helps the board determine whether the organization is achieving its mission. When the board knows what is going well, based on outcomes, it facilitates strategic planning. Such reporting helps the staff learn what it is doing right. Based on these results, program planning and teaching can become more effective and efficient. In a sense, positive outcomes give teachers a much-needed pat on the back. Clients benefit because program services will be improved.

The accurate data reporting process needs to produce information that helps the organization make decisions; otherwise, it is a waste of time and money.

How do outcomes affect the program improvement process? The accurate data reporting process needs to produce information that helps the organization make decisions; otherwise, it is a waste of time and money. The results help an organization determine and prioritize what is needed for program improvement. Areas for change might include recruitment, retention, pre- and post-testing, or professional development.

For example, by studying the data from sign-in sheets, our organization was able to spot a drop in attendance in the sixth week of our program. To help improve retention, field trips and special classroom events are now specifically timed to encourage students to stay in the program. In another area, we noticed inconsistency in the scoring of the BEST Test. One teacher interpreted the scores differently from another. Our program recognized a need for staff development so that teachers could learn how to properly and systematically administer and score the test.

There are several issues that need to be addressed with regard to data reporting. How do we quantify quality data? In other words, when Tony tells me that he is now reading to his son, that he wants to be more involved in his child's life, how do I quantify that information? Doesn't this change in Tony's behavior indicate significant growth? Another issue: for successful data reporting to occur, everyone in the organization needs to support the process and do it systematically. Getting this support, however, is often difficult.

Accurate data reporting, which is integral and vital to the program improvement process, is at the heart of providing better services to the communities we serve.

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Love, Arnold J. (1991). *Internal Evaluation: Building Organizations from Within*. Sage Publications, 2455 Teller Road, Newbury Park, CA 91320.■

Self-assessment:

turning the mirror around

by Sandy Strunk

Introspection is not a skill that comes easily to many adult basic educators. We are "learner centered." We are always responsive to state and federal guidelines. We meet the needs of our stakeholders in the workplace, in the classroom, and throughout the community at large. We assess, instruct, evaluate, and support—others. We work collaboratively whenever possible.

With our gaze perpetually directed outward, it is easy to lose sight of our own effectiveness as educators. Sometimes we are so busy "doing" that we stop questioning why we do what we do the way we do it. Self-assessment is about turning the mirror around so that we can reflect upon our practice as a first step toward program improvement.

There are many tools and processes to support reflective practice. Pennsylvania's Learning from Practice initiative encompasses two practitioner research models, both of which offer a systematic process for critical reflection. With the support of project facilitators and regional Professional Development Center staff, practitioners work alone or in small groups to ask important questions about their work, gather and analyze relevant data, and share their findings with others. Learning from Practice is a powerful initiative for improving teaching and learning across the state.

At the program and agency level, the EQUAL Self-Assessment Tool can be used to help local programs get started in the process of continuous improvement. Based on Pennsylvania's ten Indicators of Program Quality (see previous page), the Self-Assessment instrument asks four types of questions:

- *Yes/No* questions ask if certain core practices are in place at the program level. A typical question might be, "Does your program use a standardized assessment instrument that is appropriate to your target population(s)?"
- *Descriptive* questions ask how your program is doing certain things. For example, "How often are Individualized Learning Plans updated?"
- *Brainstorming* questions such as "What problems and/or concerns do you have related to curriculum and instruction?" are designed to generate ideas for future investigation.
- *Spotlight on performance* questions ask you to collect data related to the ABLE program performance standards.

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

The EQUAL Self-Assessment Tool was created for Program Improvement Teams to work on together. Responses to the questions are scored by the team and the priority of each item is negotiated among team members. Each facet of a quality indicator may not have the same priority within the program. While the Indicators of Program Quality certainly provide guidance related to high-quality performance, there is no one right or wrong answer to any question in the Self-Assessment. The tool was designed to be responsive to local context and the wide spectrum of adult basic and literacy education providers in Pennsylvania.

The results of the assessment can be used to inform program improvement plans, as a basis for requesting technical assistance and site-specific training from a regional Professional Development Center, and as a foundation for ongoing program planning. How the results of the instrument are used is a local decision. While the Self-Assessment parallels the ABLE monitoring document, it is not intended to take the place of state-level program evaluation.

Once a program has completed the Self-Assessment process, program improvement team members will still need to prioritize areas identified as needing improvement, collect and analyze data as a basis for decision making, and develop program improvement plans. It isn't enough to turn the mirror around. Self-assessment is a critical first step, but it is a first step. Acknowledging areas for needed improvement carries with it a new responsibility for ongoing improvement at both the practitioner and the program levels.■

WHERE DO VOLUNTEERS FIT IN?

by Regina Cooper

Volunteers meet many needs in adult education programs of every stripe. In literacy councils, ESL classrooms, GED programs, and agency offices, volunteers are donating their time and energy toward improving adult basic and literacy education programs.

Volunteers first receive training from within the agency, by Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth, through one of the six regional Professional Development Centers, or through a literacy coalition. When they are ready, they may be matched with an adult learner for one-on-one tutoring, assist a teacher by working with individual students needing extra help, or work with a small group on a specific skill. In adult education's many multi-level classrooms, this help is priceless. Volunteers can tailor the classroom work directly to an individual student's needs.

Additionally, volunteers assist classroom teachers with "housekeeping." Volunteers take attendance, maintain student files, and contact absent students. They wash chalkboards, hand out corrected homework, and make photocopies. Volunteers can be found in the darkest corner of the agency office, sorting old records or contacting people who have borrowed books from the lending library a little too long. Volunteers may even serve on an agency's program improvement team. And why not? Our work is directly related to teaching and learning.

Volunteers have needs, too. We may need more training options. We need to be included in better communications among paid and unpaid staff. We may even need a place to park. Above all, volunteers need to be used! Ask us what we can offer. Tell us what you need from us; direction is imperative. Communicate, communicate, communicate! Thank us. We are glad to be here.■

Working with Program Performance Standards

by Trish Link and Karen Bergey

"What does this standards business have to do with teachers?" I found myself asking that question in the fall of 1996 when our EQUAL team began our Program Self-Assessment as a pilot site. The Program Self-Assessment is designed to help programs identify and prioritize program improvement needs. The program improvement process required our team to answer assessment questions for each of Pennsylvania's ten Indicators of Program Quality. We would then work toward prioritizing our areas of need and develop a program improvement plan while using our Data for Decision Making Logs. So, how did this actually work? And did it make a difference in my classroom? The answer is a definite *yes*. As an Even Start instructor, I began to answer the self-assessment questions with my students in mind.

The first question in our self-assessment asked, "Are learner goals currently assessed within your program? If so, how?" I knew my learners' goals but were they adequately assessed and was there a record of this? I began to look closely at my student records. There were indications that some wanted to get a GED or improve their English but there was not a lot more than that. We are now using an Individual Learning Plan that clearly outlines standardized assessment, educational interests, learning preferences, educational goals (short term and long term), and an action plan.

The questions around Indicator #4, which states that programs have curriculum and instruction geared to student learning styles and levels of student needs, asked, "Does your program have specific instructional goals? If so, what are they?" I had never stopped to write every one of our instructional goals down until this question was asked. I came up with an extensive list from basic education in reading, writing, and math skills, GED preparation in the five GED subject areas, parenting lessons, career exploration, CPR and first aid, and English as a second language.

The next question asked, "Does your program use a standardized assessment instrument that is appropriate to your target population?" This question is directly related to the Program Performance Standards on educational gains. The standards clearly indicated a list of standardized assessment instruments and the expected levels of achievement. I knew what was expected but was not sure how my students compared to these expectations. I began to compile a list of my students and their pre- and post-test scores on the TABE and GED exams. I learned a lot. Seventy-five percent of the math TABE scores increases between 1.0 and 4.2 TABE levels. The other 25% showed gains, but they were less than 1.0 level. This was promising news for an instructor concerned with learning gains. The GED scores (Contemporary post-test scores and actual GED scores) also showed great gains. Out of 67 matching pre-post subtest scores, 54 subtests, or 80.5%, showed gains. Fifty subtest scores (74.5%) showed gains of 3 or more points, which was the Program Performance Standard.

Looking at these scores and comparing them to the Performance Standards was informative to me as an instructor. When I looked more closely at the math TABE scores, I found the math computation scores to show greater gains than the math concept scores. This was beneficial information for my future math instruction. Upon closer examination of the GED scores, I found that decreases were made in the science pre-post test scores more often than the other four GED subject areas. This information can directly improve my future teaching and my students' learning.

Karen Bergey, an ESL instructor on the same EQUAL Program Improvement Team, began to look at her own classroom in a more comprehensive way. After assessing such areas as student retention, curriculum, student progress, and recruitment, she was able to share this information with the other ESL instructors in our program. This in-depth analysis by the team has motivated the ESL instructors to try some new ideas. Realizing that not all issues could be addressed immediately, they chose to concentrate on two areas for improvement: Indicator #1, student progress and achievement, and Indicator #4, curriculum and instruction.

Student progress and achievement was an issue that we could address immediately. As teachers we were sure our students were making progress, but we were not always showing this progress in our final reports. The problem was that we were pre-testing in September and post-testing in May. We were capturing a very small percentage of our students for post-testing. In Karen's class last year, only 27% had actually been post-tested. The changes we immediately incorporated because of the self-assessment were: testing students every 50 hours, creating a student database to keep records of the scores and hours completed, and pre- and post-testing with different forms of the BEST test. This testing has not only resulted in capturing more students, but it has given the teachers information needed to help better serve their students during the year.

The second program change was related to curriculum and instruction. Changes in class schedules and times, more levels of ESL classes, offering special classes such as pronunciation or conversation, and curriculum changes are all new concepts being piloted by the ESL program. This is all directly related to the work done by the EQUAL team in their program self-assessment.

Working through the EQUAL self-assessment and comparing our data to the Program Performance Standards was an enlightening process. It indicated areas for improvement but also areas where teaching and learning were occurring and flourishing.■

For more information on Program Performance Standards and the EQUAL Self-Assessment, talk to your program administrator. Performance Standards for Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs *are also available on ABLEsite, www.cas.psu.edu/docs/pde/able/ablesite.html.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Serving the multiple needs of adult learners through interagency collaboration

by Sheila Sherow

Adults are complex beings and carry with them a myriad of needs and goals. To do the best job we can in helping them meet their needs and, ultimately, attain their goals, we must identify not only their educational requirements, but also their personal obligations that relate to their roles as family members, citizens, and workers.

Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* illustrates the different types of basic human needs that must be satisfied in order to learn, grow, and improve. Basic survival needs include hunger; communication; health; physical, emotional, and psychological safety; the need to feel secure, which involves the ability to share interests, problems, experiences, joys, and sorrows; and the need for self-esteem—to be recognized as valuable to someone for something.

Once basic needs are being met, individuals can focus on learning as a means to reach their full potential. If basic survival needs remain unserved, they can become barriers to participation in adult basic and literacy education services or they can diminish the potential for learning, growth, and improvement.

In addition, there are often practical needs that need to be served to promote and support participation in adult basic and literacy education services. The most common of these are often considered support services, including transportation and childcare. Practical considerations may also include flexible class schedules and alternative means of providing services, such as the availability of well-trained tutors.

Teachers, tutors, and counselors must also recognize the growing emphasis on workforce development and increasing need for basic and literacy education to help adults attain employment goals. To serve adult learners' employment-related academic aims, practitioners must develop partnerships with local businesses and economic development groups to learn as much as possible about the types of local jobs that are and will be available and the skill level requirements of those jobs.

Practitioners must also become aware of the education needs of incumbent workers who will require additional training or retraining in order to maintain or advance in their jobs.

CAN'T DO EVERYTHING

No one program or service can or should try to satisfy all of the needs of adult learners. First of all, funding guidelines limit the types of services that can be offered and, secondly, many of the services that are needed fall out of the range of professional expertise available within a single program or agency. Coordination of local services is the key to maximizing the outcomes for adult learners. Interagency cooperation and collaboration are imperative to serve the multiple needs of adult learners.

Practitioners must: 1) increase their own awareness, as well as community awareness, of local adult basic and literacy education needs and services; 2) identify and learn as much as possible about the services other human resource agencies and programs in the community offer to adults; 3) begin interagency communication focusing on how coordinating existing services can enhance the overall effectiveness and impact of all coordinating agencies; and 4) form partnerships with local businesses and economic development groups.

JOINING FORCES

So how do we begin interagency collaboration, and how do we establish partnerships with businesses? Focus and remain focused on the goal—to coordinate services in order to best serve the multiple needs of adult learners, thereby maximizing their potential for learning, growth, and improvement. Develop a common language among service providers and business partners. Establish partnerships for the purpose of coordinating existing services. Work towards a shared vision for the future and define a mission to clearly articulate that vision. Identify what each partner can contribute to and needs from other partners in terms of serving learner needs. Examine areas where services duplicate the efforts of other services, and develop uniform procedures that can be transferred from agency to agency; for example, client intake paperwork. Be prepared to talk to business in business terms.

Take small steps, case by case or staff member by staff member, if necessary. Learn from and build on successes. ■

* Maslow, A.H. (1970). *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper and Brothers.

Improving teaching and learning begins with knowing your learners.

Who are our adult students?

by Tana Reiff

Just who are adult basic and literacy education programs serving, and why do people avail themselves of our services? The short answer is that most of our adult students are individuals over the age of 16 years who have not achieved a high school diploma. More specifically, at what literacy levels do they enter our programs? What are people's most common reasons for attending adult education classes? What is the demographic description of our student population? And how can we expect our student demographics to change over the next few years?

Statistics to answer these questions were gathered from the 1992 State Adult Literacy Survey (SALS), administered by Educational Testing Service; data collected annually by the Pennsylvania Department of Education; and figures from the U.S. Census Bureau.

LITERACY LEVELS

The 1992 State Adult Literacy Survey studied 1,600 randomly selected adults representing the general adult population of Pennsylvania. The SALS was based on the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), which studied 26,000 adults representing the general nationwide adult population. Both the NALS and the SALS measured adults' proficiencies in three literacy scales—prose, document, and quantitative (see Glossary, page 62, for definitions), on five levels within each scale.

The Pennsylvania SALS found that:

- 18–22% of adults demonstrated skills in the lowest of five levels of prose, document, and quantitative proficiencies. It is now generally noted that one out of five adults in Pennsylvania is functioning at a very low literacy level.
- 36% of adults who performed in the lowest quantitative proficiency level had completed high school or a GED certificate. Half of this group were age 65 or older and 40% had physical or mental conditions that kept them from work, school, housework, etc.
- 25–28% of respondents performed in Level 2 on each literacy scale. Their skills were more varied than those in Level 1 but still quite limited.
- Individuals in both Levels 1 and 2 had difficulty with tasks requiring them to integrate or synthesize information from complex or lengthy texts or to perform quantitative tasks involving setting up a problem and then carrying out two or more sequential operations to solve it.
- About one-third of the adults performed in Level 3 on each literacy scale, 17% in Level 4, and 2-4% in Level 5.
- Average scores were approximately the same as adults in the national study.
- Pennsylvania residents who were born in the United States had higher prose and quantitative proficiencies than foreign born.
- Men's and women's average prose and document proficiencies did not differ, but men's average quantitative proficiencies were 15 points higher than women's.

The SALS showed unequivocally that a serious literacy problem exists in Pennsylvania, as the NALS had shown on a nationwide basis. However, according to Pennsylvania Department of Education estimates, only about 2% of adults without high school diplomas and 15% of residents whose first language is not English actually enroll in programs funded under the Federal Adult Education Act and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Act 143 (Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Act) of 1986—the programs administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education.

WHO'S ENTERING PROGRAMS

The Bureau's figures draw a statistical profile of entering ABLE students. For the 1996-97 program year (the most recent for which statistics are available at this writing), entering students described their *primary reasons for participation* in ABLE programs as:

Reasons for participation	Number	%
To get a diploma or certificate	12,834	23.7
To learn the English language	8,363	15.4
To qualify for training or military	7,222	13.3
To improve basic skills	6,657	12.3
To obtain driver's license	5,070	9.4
To get a better job	4,834	8.9
SPOC participation	2,850	5.3
To increase reading competence	2,256	4.2
For other reasons/no reason given	1,786	3.3
To increase competence in math	1,748	3.2
Participation mandated for AFDC, parole	1,644	3.0
For social or personal reasons	1,396	2.6
To help children with homework	372	.7
To obtain citizenship	372	.7
Total	**54,147**	**100***

Students fall into the following learning categories, based on their needs and literacy levels at entry:

Entering level	Number	%
Preliterate ABE	1,393	2.5
Beginning ABE	8,143	15.0
Intermediate ABE	12,676	23.4
Preliterate ESL	1,045	1.9
Beginning ESL	6,292	11.6
Intermediate ESL	3,674	6.8
Advanced ESL	1,413	2.6
Adult High School	19,511	36.0
Total	**54,147**	**100***

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REIFF *Continued from page 11*

As noted by the SALS, literacy levels do not always correlate to the number of years individuals attended school during their K-12 years. The table below shows that although the great majority of our students have completed grades 10, 11, and even 12, completed grades do not always indicate literacy competency.

Last grade completed	Number	%
12	9,102	16.8
11	9,127	16.8
10	9,364	17.3
9	6,376	11.8
8	2,749	5.1
7	1,189	21.9
6	793	1.6
5	413	.8
4	326	.6
3	242	.4
2	181	.3
1	368	.7
Special Education	4,663	8.6
Foreign Diploma	2,835	5.2
None or Not Reported	2,633	4.8
Total	**54,147**	**100***

LIFE SITUATION

New students are also asked about their employment status. The 1996-97 responses were as follows:

Employment status	Number	%
Employed	15,917	29.4
Unemployed/Available for Employment	20,383	37.6
Unemployed/Unavailable for Employment	17,847	32.9
Total	**54,147**	**100***

At time of enrollment, almost exactly one-third of our students are on Public Assistance and two-thirds are not.

On Public Assistance?	Number	%
No 35,763	66	
Yes 18,384	34	
Total	**54,147**	**100**

When asked about their marital status, enrolling students responded as follows:

Living situation	Number	%
Single parent	12,319	22.7
Two-parent home	9,474	17.5
Head of household/no dependents	3,106	5.7
Dependent	4,914	9.1
Living alone	18,963	35.0
Living in group quarters	5,371	9.9
Total	**54,147**	**100***

SEX, RACE, AGE

Typically, more than half of our students are female—usually 5%-10% more than male. But in the last several years, since the start of welfare reform and higher employment figures and after the initial surge of mostly male candidates for the Commercial Driver's License, the gap between female and male students has widened a bit, to 56.5% female and 43.5% male—a difference of 13% in 1996-97.

Race breakdown has remained fairly constant. However, it should be noted that minorities account for a much higher portion of our clientele than the Pennsylvania population at large, and most of the minority students attend programs in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Furthermore, Hispanic and Asian populations have increased in areas of the state other than the large cities, bringing the need for more English as a second language services to more diverse areas. In 1996-97, our students' races broke down as follows:

Race	Number	%
White or Other	28,386	52.4
Black	14,137	26.1
Hispanic	7,169	13.2
Asian	4,215	7.8
Native American	240	4.4
Total	**54,147**	**100***

Half of our students fall into the 25-44 age group. This is a shift from prior years, when the majority fell into the 16-24 range (which is now broken down into 16-18 and 19-24 to better show the representation of the high-school-age group).

Age	Number	%
16-18	3,774	7.0
19-24	13,939	25.7
25-44	27,469	50.7
45-59	6,561	12.1
60+	2,404	4.4
Total	**54,147**	**100***

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

What demographic changes will affect our programs in the future? Population growth is expected in all states through at least 2025, but Pennsylvania is the next-to-slowest-growing state of all. However, Pennsylvania is projected to see the tenth-highest growth in immigrant population—a jump of 405,000 by 2025! This is certain to further increase the need for adult ESL services, compounded by the fact that limited-English-proficient adults are the most likely to seek out educational services.

Meanwhile, the number of adults our programs serve in relation to the total need is likely to remain relatively low, while welfare reform and efforts to upgrade workforce skills is likely to increase the demand for adult education services, at least on a short-term basis. Along with this, there will be a need for increased public funding to even begin to keep up with the need for services. All this considered, it is fair to project that the need for adult basic and literacy education will remain high for as far into the future as anyone can project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Annual Report. (Issued annually). Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Jenkins, Lynn B. and Irwin S. Kirsch. (1994). *Adult Literacy in Pennsylvania: Results of the State Adult Literacy Survey.* Educational Testing Service and Pennsylvania Department of Education.■

* Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding off decimals.

Facing your learners: wholesome instruction in an exciting environment

by Richard Gacka

It's a beautiful, sunny day, and you're cruising down the road in your new red sportscar listening to the Beach Boys on the CD—life is good! Hmm, a crossroads ahead—sign coming up. To the left, miles of nice, new, smooth asphalt, as far as the eye can see. To the right, a windblown, faded sign: "Pokadillo–20 Mi." Twenty miles of bad road, real bad road. So which do you choose?

Well, encountering new adult learners is a lot like the situation described above. You can have smooth driving in your future or you can be in for one very rocky ride. The choice is yours. Which way do you choose?

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Based on many years of adult education program supervision, lots of college courses, and hours of deep contemplation (well, maybe a couple of minutes), my profound advice to you is this: "Don't make things harder than they need to be." Sure, you want to do well, and maybe you've even completed some formal pedagogical foundations classes. What you need to keep in mind is the main reason that you are reading this article: what do I need do to become a good adult education teacher? At some point you're going to meet your new students, adults who are coming to you because they want you to help them improve themselves. The key words to focus on are "coming to you," "adults" and "help them." Based on these key elements, and the alignment of the moon, sun, and Jupiter, here is a bit of friendly advice offered for your consideration.

Sure, they're students, but first of all they're adults—living, breathing, feeling adults who want better for themselves and their families. Remember my earlier advice to not make it harder than it needs to be? Meet them, greet them, look them in the eye, pat them on the back, tell them (with sincerity) that you're glad they decided to come to class and that together you will polish up those rusty skills. Don't be condescending, syrupy, insincere, or sarcastic. Talk to them like adults—that's what they are. In terms of your speech, behavior, and appearance, their perceptiveness is as acute as yours or mine and their sensitivity is probably a lot keener. (Trust me, it took a lot of guts for them to show up and their anxiety level is probably at 10). I don't want to put the weight of the world on your shoulders, but besides being their teacher (which is somewhat ominous in and of itself), many of the students will view you as their role model. They probably won't come up and tell you this to your face, but if you do this teaching thing right, many of them will try to copy you—and it will be important that you send them the right messages to copy. Treat them like you would want to be treated.

Cook up some positive self-talk: "Today I'm going to knock their socks off." It's showtime.

TAKE IT EASY

Second piece of advice: "Lighten up." Adult education is not the Crusades. We are not in the business of teaching nuclear physics or brain surgery. We're in the business of teaching adults the basic skills and knowledge that they will need to get a job, better run a household, help their kids with their homework, communicate with others, or get a high school diploma—all stuff that should be second nature to you. Lighten up, pull back, go with the flow, think a little about why you know this stuff and share that knowledge with them. Learning is a very subjective event, at some point it "clicks" for the learner. If you can't think of how your teaching will help them to get a job, better run a household, help their kids with their homework, or get a high school diploma, don't teach it. There's not a lot of time available for class, so don't waste it covering junk they will never need to know.

On a similar note, have fun. Teaching should be fun—fun for you and hard work but fun for the student as well. Remember that book that was B-O-R-I-N-G? Never finished it, did you? Remember that party that was, to say the least, dull? Never went back, did you? Remember that workshop you went to where the speaker was about as exciting as yogurt? Didn't remember a thing he said, do you? Think of yourself as a department store and your students as your customers. If they don't like how they are treated, if they think they're not getting something back for their time and energy, or if they feel that it has not been a useful experience, then *they won't be back.* If you want to be there, if you want to show them how to do things that right now they can't do, and if you communicate structure, organization, and intent to them through your words and actions, then the stage is set for a mutually enjoyable experience. Do this before every class: close your eyes, visualize Jay Leno waiting to go on stage, visualize him playing his monologue over in his head, let your hands hang by your sides and shake them, loosen up, psych yourself up, cook up some positive self-talk: "Today I'm going to knock their socks off." It's showtime. Yes, Bubba, education requires a degree of showmanship, and you should be ready to ham it up. How many activities do you voluntarily participate in that aren't fun? Few or none. Lighten up, pull back, go with the flow, think a little about why you know this stuff and share that knowledge with your students.

JUST DO IT

Remember the word *do.* Use it frequently. What do employers require new employees to do? Teach that. Ask your students, "What would you like to be able to do?" Show them how, step by step, and have them practice it until they do it right every time. Stop and think, how do I teach them to do all these things that they need to know how to

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do? Before you do a lesson, think about the process needed to do that task, and then teach them the process and watch what they do. Think "do": *Do what you need to do* to teach them to *do what they need to do.*

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN

Last piece of free advice: "Watch your students and take their cues." (Don't look now, but you will be doing the terrible "A thing"—Assessment.) You might have stayed up all night writing the world's greatest lesson plan; yeah, that baby is destined to get into the lesson plan hall of fame. But if your students don't want to learn the stuff that's in that plan, then you are going to be one disappointed puppy when it bombs. Watch your students; every minute they will be sending you signals as to what's important to them, what they want to learn. Watch their eyes, their posture, their questions, their interactions with one another and the all-too-frequent blank looks on their faces. Good assessment depends more on sensitivity than tests.

Remember, you're going to be serving people who have had some pretty bad meals at the ol' educational restaurant. Don't offer them up the same food. Watch them and find out what they like and then give it to them. Offer their brains spice, pizzazz, and variety, served tastefully in a comfortable and friendly environment. As a teacher, don't have only one strategy on your menu; be creative, be varied, be different. Offer wholesome instruction in an exciting environment.

OK, it's time for you to move on down that highway. Think it over, and decide which road you want to travel. To the left, miles of nice new smooth asphalt, as far as the eye can see. To the right, a windblown, faded sign, "Pokadillo–20 Mi." Twenty miles of bad road, real bad road. So which do you choose? Don't make it harder than it is, because it's not very hard. Treat them as you would like to be treated. Good luck, greenhorn.■

Learner-centered adult education

by Jean L. Fleschute and Lois Zinn

In her evaluation of our program, Maria wrote, "I used to mope around the house and do nothing. Now I have a different attitude. I see people in class with problems, too. We're all here working out our problems. I go home now and write down my goals and think about what I want to do with my life."

Maria is like many students attending our learner-centered program, where skills are taught in the context of students' lives and located in their interests. Teaching meets the goals and needs of students. Power is shared, and students have a voice. Learners help to develop the curriculum and shape the program, teaching is built on what students already know, and the learner is respected and seen as a whole person who has emotional, social, and intellectual needs. Discussion and other forms of self-expression are integral to the learner-centered classroom. This approach fosters critical thinking.

Many of our students come from a traditional, or deficit, model where the teacher is viewed as the all-knowing expert, while the student is seen as an empty mind passively waiting to be filled (Freire 1970). The teacher holds the power. This model focuses on teaching skills in isolation and frequently relies on commercial materials which are irrelevant to students' lives. This paradigm comes from a longstanding tradition that learning to read meant one would have the ability to read the Bible and therefore attain salvation. Teachers were responsible for moral as well as reading instruction. In this country, the model was used as a means to socialize people to the American way of life. The "experts" rather than the students have dictated the curriculum and made the fundamental decisions about education (Fingeret, "The Social ... Literacy Education," p.6).

WHY LEARNER-CENTERED?

Under the deficit model teachers try to keep their classes orderly and their students silenced. Is learning really taking place, we wonder. And how meaningful is that learning? How can students be invested in the classroom when they have no input into their education? While it requires an open mind to shift to a new approach, time and energy to prepare good lessons, and courage to relinquish control of one's classroom, the benefits are truly worthwhile. It leads to a richer curriculum and provides students with scaffolding, taking them from where they are, helping them to move to where they want to be. A learner-centered approach to education is relevant, meaningful, goal-oriented, and easier in the long run.

It may not always seem easier, however, because students often feel anxiety about having a voice and the freedom to choose. They are used to the deficit model where they were told what to learn. Initially, it is common for students to resist a learner-centered approach.

INCORPORATING THE APPROACH

Creating a learner-centered curriculum involves careful listening and keen observation. You have to know where your students are most engaged. This can be learned through conversations, formal class discussions, what you hear students talking about on their break, issues they raise in their dialogue journals (a notebook in which students and teachers regularly write back and forth), initial interviews and autobiographical sketches, and ongoing student evaluations of themselves, the program, and the teacher. While these methods of assessment can serve as a guide, the teacher should remember that she may not always be sure that she really knows where the students' interests lie.

The physical environment should support the learner-centered approach. Rather than having students sit at isolated desks, they should be arranged in a horseshoe or circular fashion to encourage dialogue. The teacher sits alongside students and partakes in class assign-

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FLESCHUTE & ZINN, *from page 14*
ments rather than remain at her own desk or stand at a podium, dictating orders. This arrangement helps to equalize power.

The ideal classroom is set up with areas for different purposes. One section could be a library and reading section. Books should invite students rather than push them away. There should be a variety of genres and appropriate for different reading and age levels. An office space where private conversations can take place is important as well.

A learner-centered approach needs to address different learning styles. Recognizing that some students learn better visually while others learn better through an auditory, kinesthetic, or hands-on approach, it is important to have different modalities and a variety of media. It would be useful to incorporate a listening corner with tape recorders and prerecorded cassettes. This could include student-, teacher-made, or commercial materials, such as audio books. Pull-down maps, overhead projectors, and bulletin boards with displays of student work all enhance visual learning. Bringing film into the classroom reinforces both auditory and visual learning. Art, movement, and activities that include the senses help kinesthetic learners. Our unit on India, which addressed all of these learning styles, included Indian food, music, dance, slide presentations, film, and even a yoga lesson. Because activities incorporated different learning styles, we believe that we were able to reach most every student.

Curriculum should reflect students' needs and interests. In our classroom, a theme that emerges again and again is family. Many of our students are single welfare mothers struggling to support themselves and their children. Usually, when we see a theme emerge we explore it further with the class through brainstorming and discussion. We may write the theme word—in this example "family"—on the board and create a map or web that clusters concepts by category. A story or book, which the class reads together, is chosen based on the students' strongest interests or concerns.

In our program we make literature, both fiction and nonfiction, central to our units. Literature is an important tool to help students explore issues in their own lives and expand their understanding of others and the world. We also build on our thematic units with topics and activities that relate to the GED test, such as map and chart reading, graph interpretation, writing activities, and math problems.

Along with real content, the curriculum needs to be structured as well as fluid. We use a directed reading activity format where we present prereading, reading, and postreading questions and activities. This format engages students by incorporating their background knowledge, strengthening their comprehension, and encouraging reflection. Activities and plans are negotiated with students. In our curriculum on India, teachers thought of showing the film *Gandhi*, as he is a major historical figure. The rationale was explained to students, but ultimately they made the decision about whether it should be a part of the curriculum. This is not to say that students have total control. The teacher is a member of the class and should have a voice. Further, it would be misleading to imply that teachers do not maintain authority at some level.

Sometimes the curriculum is enhanced spontaneously during a "teachable moment," after the class has chosen a book or story. The teacher, through keen observation, may perceive a specific interest and plan activities around that topic. For example, one of our classes chose to read Patrice Gaines' *Laughing in the Dark*, an autobiographical account that takes place largely in the '60s and '70s. The teacher, who grew up during this time, noticed that the students, who were younger than she, were not relating to the story and therefore not fully responding to the book. To make Gaines' story come alive, the teacher planned activities that would teach the students about the history of the times. These lessons culminated in the creation of a student-made book, *Flashback to the Sixties*, which included poetry, interviews, events current to the times, and pictures from a computer encyclopedia. Through the process of this project, the students became actively engaged, highly motivated, and proud of their finished product. Further, they came together as a community.

Assessment is ongoing and supportive, focusing on students' strengths and current knowledge, and it is situated in the context of their lives. In our initial interview, for example, we ask students about their interests and current literacy practices. Assessment is done *with* students not *to* them. Rather than having only the teachers evaluate the students, assessment is a two-way process: learners evaluate themselves, their teacher, and the program. Based on such assessment, a teacher might see a pattern in a class's evaluations and make changes in the curriculum. Learner-centered assessment is a part of the class routine and might include intake forms, writing samples, initial interviews, student evaluations, peer interviews, student-teacher conferences, dialogue journals, portfolios, and progress notes.

In learner-centered education, not only are students assessing themselves, but so are teachers. Observation of one's practice may prompt teacher inquiry, which can lead to improved classroom practices. Joining together with a group of practitioners is a good way to learn from others and get feedback. Belonging to such a community gives teachers the opportunity to network, become inspired, and increase their repertoire of classroom reading material and teaching strategies. Indeed, the success of learner-centered education depends on how well read the teacher is. Belonging to an inquiry group also provides support. Just like the student Maria expressed, being a part of a community helps all of us to see that we are not alone in our struggles.

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Faring well in welfare reform

by Ella Morin

No one disputes that adult basic and literacy education services are part of the landscape for today's adult learner. And no one disputes that the landscape is changing as local, state, and national emphases necessitate changes in services. These changes come from the national triggers of welfare reform, an emphasis on accountability, and the call for integrated services. Additionally, the strong economy is driving adult education services as program staff, learners, and employers are influenced by an expanding and demanding marketplace. As providers of adult basic and literacy education services, we cannot ignore these change agents, and we need to be sure that adult education is integral to the landscape now and in the next century.

Adult learners do not come to adult basic and literacy education programs with educational goals isolated from their other needs and goals such as skills for work, community, and family. Working with an adult population in today's economy means taking a fresh look at one's adult learners, program, and services. What are the learner's needs? When is the learner available for instruction? What support does the learner need to participate in learning? Additionally, programs should ask themselves about the community's needs and demands.

Because "work first" has become the driving force in welfare reform, providers must work to integrate their services with the landscape as it is painted by local county assistance offices. Adult basic education (ABE) programs can provide pre-employment services, and welfare workers are realizing that basic skills services are critical for self-sufficiency; therefore, cooperation between ABE provider and the County Assistance Office (CAO) will assist in all stakeholders' having their needs and goals met. Exemplary ABE programs are often characterized by having up-front agreements with CAOs about the objectives of the education program, providing instruction that leads to specific job-training programs and gearing instruction to employment as a primary goal. For example, an ABLE program can adjust its services by changing the times or locations of classes so that they are more convenient to adult learners who are employed or who are required to spend time in specific work-related activities as required by the CAO. Many entry-level workers and first-time employees need an instructional program that reinforces the job skills they are acquiring, and ABE programs have long provided "post-employment" services. Employed adult learners have participated in educational programs at a worksite as well as at the facilities of a local education provider.

WORK TOWARD WORK

It is important that adult education recognize its role in preparing adults for work as well as for its general educational role so that there is no gap between the fields of adult education and employment and training. Adult education has served adults with many different goals and needs and will continue to do so. Many adults who have enrolled in ABE programs did not have employment or training as their goal, and their individual goals were met. Programs also have not "creamed"—limited their enrollments to those learners with higher-level skills, making it easier for them to achieve their goals. ABE programs should still provide for learners' broad educational purposes, but the programs should also prepare learners for employment. It is important that adult education providers and employment and training providers coordinate their efforts since many of their "customers" may be the same. Working closely with local CAOs, Job Centers, and employers is a necessity in today's environment so that ABE providers are ready to step in at appropriate times to provide basic skills instruction.

Work activities in an instructional program can expand the perspectives of learners and practitioners alike. A February 1998 publication from the National Center for Family Literacy, "An Update Extra," stated that work activities integrated into an instructional program can increase learners' self-confidence in the workplace in terms of interpersonal relationships and workplace skills; introduce learners to career choices and an exploration of the job market; and provide an opportunity for building resumes and acquiring letters of recommendation. The article listed specific activities, such as visits to work sites; volunteer work, such as serving at a child's school; job shadowing; or internships. These activities may meet a welfare recipient's work requirement, but the education provider should be sure they fit with the adult learner's welfare employability plan. Being aware of employment opportunities and skills for that employment is a service to the local community as well as to the adult learners.

The incorporation of workplace skills into adult education programs is not out of place. Often referred to as "soft skills," they are actually what many employers look for in workers. Employers want workers who come to work every day on time, are able to make decisions, can work in teams and get along with others, can follow directions, work hard, and are honest and dependable. Do we adult educators expect any less from the adult learners in our classes? By incorporating these work skills, ABE providers can customize their programs and services in cooperation with a CAO and Job Center to create a curriculum that combines basic skills development with work preparation and personal growth. Tailoring a program so that the adult learner can see the connection between education and employment may increase program enrollment and retention. Practitioners can find curricula that tie workplace and basic skills together from commercial sources as well as Section 353 Special Demonstration projects produced in the Commonwealth over the years. (Contact the State Literacy Resource Centers for assistance.) These projects show that the same common basic skills are needed across several occupations.

Adult education providers are part of the new landscape. By incorporating workplace basic skills into programs, we can enhance what we have been doing so well for so long for adult learners is enhanced. By incorporating employability skills into the curriculum, providers will assist adult learners in becoming the best they can be: full participants in the lives of their communities and families.■

Adult educators as case managers

by Carol Molek

"I'm an adult educator. What does case management have to do with me?"

When you work in adult education you will probably find yourself needing to assist your students in dealing with issues outside the academic arena. This is where case management can support your efforts to improve teaching and learning. Most people think of the social service field when they hear the term *case management;* however, there are many applications of case management strategies and skills that are useful to the adult educator. Many personal barriers facing our students prohibit them from progress in or completion of their course of study. Adult educators should look at case management as an opportunity that will support student success.

A key element of the holistic adult education program is a case-management system of service. Where resources allow under this system, each student is assigned a case manager, who may be the person who completed the intake interview with the student or another person who better matches the student's particular situation. The case manager's role with the student becomes "follow-through" as well as "follow-up" after the student leaves. The case manager helps develop an initial plan with the student and helps the student measure progress toward the goals set in the plan. The case manager and client need to meet regularly to review the plan and make changes as needed.

An additional effective support of the case management system is the establishment of case management teams. These are teams of several case managers and supervisory staff that meet regularly to discuss individual cases and brainstorm solutions to various problems and situations. A student may meet with the team to work on planning or dealing with obstacles in meeting the plan.

Case management is not new, even to adult education. Historically, the holistic approach has been successful in assisting our student population in making the next steps in their academic and vocational development.

A MANAGEMENT PROCESS

As a process, case management is student centered and goal driven. Case management will set up a framework for you to set goals with students and to assess their progress.

Case management allows you to assist your students in obtaining the services they need. The case manager works as a partner with the student to identify and prioritize personal strengths and needs. Through this partnership a plan of action is developed. Often our students need to maneuver themselves through a complex human-services system in the community. The complexity of this system may inhibit them from receiving the services they need. They may be frustrated by waiting lists, burdensome intake processes, or a lack of knowledge of what is available to them. You can help by providing direction to your students. The roles of a case manager may include: problem solver, advocate, planner, facilitator, supporter, service coordinator, referral agent, community liaison, and more. Still, the relationship between case manager and student is a partnership. For case management to be successful, students must commit to completion of services, want to take control of their lives, and acknowledge that doing so will require hard work.

The case manager works as a partner with the student to identify and prioritize personal strengths and needs.

There is a sequential order to case management activities. The first is engaging. That is, as a case manager, you must establish a relationship with your student to create a rapport and atmosphere of trust so that the partnership can solidify. The next step is assessing. In this case management activity, you can answer the questions: Where is the student now? Where does the student want to go? and How will the student get there? During this phase the student and case manager must work together to establish needs of the student. What are the student's strengths, and how can the student capitalize on them? What are the barriers that the student and case manager can identify that may prohibit this student's success? Once assessment is complete, the planning phase of case management is done. During this time an IEP (individual education plan) should be developed. This plan should include short- and long-term goals and steps for meeting these goals. The planning part of case management is ongoing throughout the student's enrollment.

Next, the issue of accessing resources should be determined. Then, coordination of services can be obtained with the assistance of the case manager. The final step in the case management sequence of activities is disengaging the student from the case management relationship. Since independence and completion of the adult education program is the ultimate goal, this is indeed a very important conclusion to case management.

Another important part of case management is the maintenance of proper documentation. To provide ongoing, appropriate services, develop case notes on your students. This will give both you and your student a record of work completed, contacts made, progress towards goals, and next steps needed.

TRAINING AVAILABLE

Learning basic principles, strategies, and techniques of case management can also help you as an adult educator who may experience resistance from students, as well as defensive behavior or other difficult situations.

Your Professional Development Center can provide you with module training in Case Management. Throughout this 12-hour training you will learn case management roles and strategies. You will understand the activities of case management and be able to apply them to your role in adult education. You will have the skills to develop a case management plan for program improvement that matches your program's needs. Knowing the principles of case management will allow you to become a better practitioner and best serve your students.■

Learning differences: no two learners are alike

by Richard Cooper, Ph.D.

There is a growing understanding that many of the literacy problems in this country are related to learning disabilities. The National Institute for Literacy has been directed by the U.S. Congress to commit a portion of its resources to assist adult educators and volunteer tutors in improving the literacy programs for adults with learning problems. To this end, the Institute established the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center in Washington, DC. The Center is charged with the task of identifying screening instruments for determining possible learning disabilities and developing a set of instructional techniques. The Institute, headed by Dr. Mary Ann Corley, disseminates information about learning disabilities and their impact on literacy through papers which the Center publishes and distributes free of charge to anyone who would like them. (See the next article for more information.)

In 1995, the National Institute for Rehabilitation and Disability Research awarded a grant to the University of Kansas and Kansas State University to research the accommodations for adults enrolled in adult education programs. The preliminary findings from this research show that adults with disabilities, including learning disabilities, are not receiving appropriate accommodations for their disabilities. Pennsylvania is one of ten states involved in this project. Both Cheryl Keenan, Director of ABLE, and I made presentations at the First Symposium on Accommodating Adults in Basic Education Programs. One site in Pennsylvania will be used as a pilot program for the accommodations research project. For more information about the research projects, contact University of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning, Institute for Adult Studies, 3061 Dole, Lawrence, KS, 66045-2342, (913) 864-4780 or visit their Web site at www.KU.ed.

WHAT IS 'DIFFERENT'?

One of the problems affecting the field of adult education is the lack of a clear definition about what constitutes a learning disability and how it differs from learning problems and learning differences. The statewide professional development project on learning differences addresses this problem directly, providing adult educators and volunteer tutors with an understanding of the characteristics of learning differences, problems, and disabilities. Not all individuals who have learning problems have a learning disability. The same perception, processing, and communication problems that limit those with severe problems interfere with learning to a lesser degree for those with less severe problems.

Statewide training provides educators in Pennsylvania with a screening instrument to identify individuals who have mild, moderate, or severe problems.

Although the definitions of learning disabilities do not include the continuum from severe to mild problems, the statewide training provides educators in Pennsylvania with a screening instrument to identify individuals who have mild, moderate, or severe problems. Those adults who have severe problems should be referred for further testing to determine if, in fact, they have a learning disability and therefore should receive accommodations and be protected from discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Those with mild and moderate problems should receive instruction using techniques which match their thought processes. An example of this is the student who has a racing mind which results in frequent errors of omission. This student needs to learn techniques that have built-in methods for checking for those errors of omission. Until the neurological research is able to define the differences between mild, moderate, and severe learning problems and various thought processes, we need to use error analysis, behavioral observation, and students' self-awareness to plan instructional programs for them. The statewide professional development project helps dispel the myths that adults with learning disabilities are not able to learn and that every individual labeled as learning disabled has a severe learning problem.

OPPORTUNITY FOR STAFF

The training sessions offered through the project include 30 different topics offered in sessions ranging from one to 15 hours: introductory sessions on the Characteristics of Learning Differences and Teaching Reading, Spelling, Writing and Math. Follow-up sessions cover Study Skills, Employment Skills, ESL, Reading Comprehension, and Vocabulary Development. In-depth sessions focus on teaching reading skills, teaching writing skills, teaching math skills, and administering the Cooper Screening for Information Processing.

Continued training is provided through additional training sessions; the *Learning disAbilities Newsletter*, published five times a year; and a toll-free phone number which adult educators may use to call the Center for Alternative Learning for advice about students suspected of having learning differences. The newsletter contains information about the field of learning differences, a schedule of the training sessions throughout the state, and an article about learning problems or instructional techniques. To obtain the newsletter or inquire about learning differences, call (800) 204-7667 or e-mail rcooper642@aol.com.

By focusing on alternative instructional techniques which utilize students' strengths rather than weaknesses, the training in the statewide project on learning differences provides adult educators and tutors in Pennsylvania with practical techniques for teaching students with learning differences, problems, and disabilities.■

Research-based strategies for teaching adults with learning disabilities

by Mary Ann Corley

As adult education, job-training, and literacy professionals strive for greater accountability and evidence of their programs' effectiveness, they are becoming increasingly aware that many of the students they serve may have learning disabilities (LD). Among other factors are the high student attrition rates in adult literacy programs, the significant numbers of students who seem to have difficulty making the expected progress, and the uncertainty about how best to provide services which are responsive to the needs of adults with LD.

The National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center (National ALLD Center) recognizes that professional development which encourages more effective teaching is critical. Set against the backdrop of a fast-moving, rapidly changing world, the teaching-learning process in the last years of the twentieth century is more dynamic than ever before. The prevalence of technology in many aspects of modern life, the information explosion and the shift to a marketplace in which the valued currency is information rather than goods, the rapidly changing nature of work and of job tasks, and the continually evolving demands of everyday life all point to the need for skills to be taught in such a way that they can to be transferred. Practitioners need appropriate, research-based teaching strategies that will help adults with LD acquire the skills they need to meet with success both in the world of work and in daily life. They need to help their students learn to cope with change and to prepare them to continue learning throughout their lifespan so that they can be fully participating members of society.

A GUIDE FOR PRACTICE

In response to this need, the National ALLD Center has developed a resource guide designed to help adult literacy programs to enhance services to adult students with learning disabilities (LD). Entitled *Bridges to Practice*, the guide reflects four years of research on "best practices" in serving literacy-level adults with LD. It is this research base which distinguishes this guide from similar products.

The purpose of the guide is to influence the decision-making process of literacy practitioners in evaluating and selecting screening tools, curricular materials, and instructional strategies for adult learners with LD. The guide is divided into four books: *Understanding Learning Disabilities; Screening for Learning Disabilities; Planning for Instruction of Adults with Learning Disabilities;* and *Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities.*

Among the questions which are frequently asked by literacy practitioners, and which the guide addresses, are:

- What is the definition of learning disabilities—and is the definition for adults different from that for children?
- What are the characteristics of learning disabilities?
- How does the literacy practitioner identify the adult student with LD?
- What teaching methods are most effective in meeting the needs of adults with LD?
- How does the literacy program select curricular materials which are appropriate for adults with LD?
- How can the practitioner address the specific social skills issues of adults with LD?
- How can literacy programs restructure their programs to be more responsive to the needs of adult students with LD?

The target audience for the guide is program administrators and professional development specialists who will attend training and be certified as "Master Trainers" of the product. The National ALLD Center is offering regional trainings across the country for up to 35 participants at each site.

DEVELOPING TRAINING TEAMS

Each state-nominated team will typically consist of one state-level staff development specialist and a local implementation team consisting of a literacy program administrator and two literacy-level teachers or tutors. Training consists of 50 hours of interactive professional development on strategies for helping literacy staff members to recognize the characteristics of learning disabilities and to provide instruction which is responsive to the needs of adults with LD. Participants who are certified as Master Trainers can then offer the training module to staff members within their own programs.

Rolled in with training on the use of *Bridges* is a component designed to help literacy providers engage in visioning and strategic planning to develop a comprehensive service delivery model for adults with LD. Components of such a model might embrace intake interviews; needs assessments, including academic assessment and diagnosis; screening for learning preferences and disabilities; interest surveys; goal setting with the learner; development of individualized education plans for each learner; development of a knowledgeable and skilled instructional staff; and buy-in from various stakeholders within the broader community of human-services providers. A seven-minute video and several topic sheets have been developed on strategies for initiating systemic reform within literacy programs designed to enhance the delivery of services to adults with LD. Training participants will be encouraged to conduct an assessment of their own programs' services and begin planning for desired changes.

In addition to sending a team to one of the regional trainings, state (and local) literacy program administrators may opt to contract with the National ALLD Center to provide training on the use of *Bridges* for as many staff persons as possible. On a cost-recovery basis, the National ALLD Center will deliver customized training for state and local literacy providers. For more information, contact Dr. Mary Ann Corley, Director, National ALLD Center, at (202) 884-8178 [voice], (202) 884-8422 [fax], or send an e-mail inquiry to mcorley@aed.org.■

Teaching in the 'real world': a personal perspective

by Eric Epstein

Most adult practitioners teach in a world that is foreign and remote to their friends, families, and neighbors. Many people have no idea that adult education includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Education Development (GED), English as a Second Language (ESL), Certified Nursing License (CNL), preparation for the Commercial Driver's License (CDL), preparation for automobile and motorcycle licenses, job preparedness, life skills, computer and workplace literacy, distance education, college preparation, counseling, tutoring, advising, listening, cajoling, pleading, transporting, and praying. Amazingly, many of the same people provide some or all of these services. Yet, when we identify ourselves as adult educators, many people seem to think we operate in the surreal and comfortable world of air-conditioned, Teflon buildings located in a fuzzy place somewhere between a coffee klatsch and a botanical garden. At one time or another, we all have had to debunk myths about the nature of our profession, workplace environment, compensation, and, most importantly, the ability and character of our students.

Let's face it, we live in a time and culture when public education is embroiled in controversy and transition. Traditional respect and reverence for educators has diminished considerably. School board meetings and teacher associations are the target of political zealots from all points on the spectrum. And even though adult education has expanded to meet an enormous demand and need, most people relegate adult educators to the margins of their educational priorities. Adult educators tend to get lumped and stereotyped as overpaid and underworked with mountains of discretionary time for recreation. Unfortunately, this perception is a result of cynicism, apathy, and ignorance.

Nobody enters adult education for the money. Actually, most practitioners are "recruited" into the field "temporarily" and spend their entire teaching career in a "temporary" position. Not only is our pay scale dramatically lower than for those teaching in public schools, but the overwhelming majority of adult educators are part-time or volunteer. Adult educators are primarily committed, passionate, and economically challenged. We are altruistic anomalies in a society driven by profit margins.

Where we work is incredibly diverse. We work in a state that spans the geographic and demographic gauntlet. Tracing my adult education roots, I feel as if I just completed a survivalist manual produced by Mother Teresa and Wyatt Earp. To the surprise and disbelief of my mother (who still insists it's never too late to go to law school), my career as an adult educator has taken me to prisons, churches, homeless shelters, housing projects, safe houses for victims of domestic abuse, work sites, union halls, farms, detention centers, bridge housing, colleges, pool halls, diners, soup kitchens, agricultural extensions, and, every once in a while, a school. My experience is not dissimilar from the majority of practitioners who have endured a long succession of "temporary" appointments.

The most important component of our role as adult educators involves the people we touch. Clearly, adult education is a mutual experience. Disappointment, senseless crime, substance abuse, and a myriad of other societal problems are all too common. And it is hard not to personalize failure and tragedy. However, as I look back, I feel fortunate to have encountered all of the students and situations. Most of our students possess the unique and sometimes painful gift of being able to size up the sincerity and integrity of their teacher. I call this sixth sense the "BS Barometer." That, coupled with their desire, motivation, and genuine appreciation, keeps me coming back even though I've been saying "This is my last year" for 15 years.

Our society has changed dramatically in the era of the global economy, technological revolution, and corporate downsizing. Traditional social compacts have given way to the "bottom line." Perhaps the ultimate irony for adult educators is that the very people who have no idea where we work and what we do may be tomorrow's students.■

Are ABLE programs accommodating special needs? *by Dave Flake*

In October 1997, adult basic and literacy education programs in Pennsylvania were surveyed to identify those which serve a specific target population requiring unique accommodations or having unique program goals related to the target population.

Of the 249 programs, 151 indicated they do not meet the criteria of providing unique accommodations or program goals to special needs populations as identified by the survey. Another 98 programs indicated they provide unique accommodations or program goals to special needs populations; however, only 35 of these programs provide these services to special-needs target populations as defined by the survey. The number of programs serving each special-population category:

Mentally retarded:	12
Mentally ill:	10
Physically handicapped:	9
Drug, alcohol rehabilitation:	6
Physically disabled:	3
Hearing impaired/deaf:	3
Mentally handicapped:	2
Visually impaired/blind:	2
Developmentally disabled:	1

A second survey was distributed to program directors of the 35 programs identified in Survey #1 to gather more specific information concerning the target populations served, how these populations are identified, what services are provided, and how the unique services are provided. The Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education will use the information to consider how the ABLE Performance Standards relate to the unique target populations.■

An overview of learner assessment

by Lori A. Forlizzi

Adult learner assessment is an important source of information for improving student learning in ABLE programs. Assessment data is also important for documenting student learning. Different types of assessment may best serve these different functions.

Adult education programs have a variety of stakeholders—individuals or groups with an interest in the performance or outcomes of a program. Many of their questions can be answered by learner assessment data. For example, students and instructors want to identify learning needs, set learning goals, monitor progress toward meeting needs and reaching goals, and continuously plan and reevaluate learning activities. Students are interested in their own progress: *How am I doing? How long will I be in the program? What will we do tomorrow in class?* Instructors are mainly interested in the progress of individual students and small groups of students: *How is this student doing? Is she making progress on this goal? What can I do next to help these students improve?* Program administrators also want to know whether the program is meeting the needs of individual students, but are mainly interested in looking at learning outcomes generally with an eye toward improving program processes. *How is the program as a whole doing? What is working in the program and what changes, if any, need to be made?* Sponsoring organizations, including funding agencies, are interested in process and outcome questions: *Are programs working? Can we report to our constituents (for example, taxpayers or donors) that programs used allotted resources to achieve outcomes? Can we change policies or funding allocations to improve outcomes generally?* To answer these questions, they need to make comparisons among students within individual programs and across programs.

Assessment data can thus be used for four major purposes: screening for placement or referral, diagnosing learning needs, measuring progress, and answering questions related to program accountability. Three of these four purposes relate directly to learning and teaching and the needs of students and instructors. However, because policies and resources may depend upon the answers to questions of accountability, students, instructors, and program administrators should also be concerned with how assessment can address these questions.

MEANING OF 'STANDARDIZED'

Assessments that can be used to answer the questions and address the purposes noted above can be divided into two major types: standardized and informal. Standardized assessments are administered under a standard set of conditions, following consistent procedures and using the same materials, items, and, in many cases, time limits. A standard set of procedures is used in scoring the assessment and in interpreting the scores. Because there is consistency in use of procedures in standardized assessments, their reliability and validity can be readily established. *Reliability* simply means consistency of measurement. For example, if you could give the same individual a perfectly reliable assessment over and over again at the "same" point in time, the assessment would measure the same characteristic or trait and yield the same score each time. A *valid* assessment is one that truly measures the characteristic or trait it is intended to measure. Whether a particular assessment is reliable and valid is usually determined through statistical procedures performed on test-score data from hundreds of individuals. Thus, standardized assessments are typically widely used. Informal assessments are those that do not follow a standard set of procedures for administration, scoring, or interpretation. Therefore, it is more difficult to establish their reliability or validity.

Assessment data can thus be used for four major purposes: screening for placement or referral, diagnosing learning needs, measuring progress, and answering questions related to program accountability.

Standardized assessments, because their development requires large-scale, coordinated effort, are usually developed by large educational publishers. Some well-known examples of standardized assessments used with adult learners in ABLE programs include the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE), the Adult Basic Literacy Examination (ABLE), the Basic English Skills Test (BEST), and the assessments that are part of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). Informal assessments may be published or teacher-made. Some examples of informal assessments used with adult learners include informal reading inventories, end-of-unit assessments that accompany instructional materials (such as end-of-unit tests in the Challenger Series), student interviews, behavioral checklists, and logs or journals kept by students or instructors. It should be noted that informal assessments vary greatly in their "informality." They can range from very structured, as in a fixed set of interview questions or observation categories, to very open. For example, an instructor might use the last several minutes of class time with a student to get the student's impressions of her progress and current needs. This informal assessment activity could provide some very important information to the instructor.

Scores on standardized assessments become meaningful when we compare them to information that helps us interpret the score. For example, the fact that a student gets 15 items correct out of 20 has little meaning without some standard of comparison. Different standardized tests utilize different standards of comparison. Some, such as the TABE and ABLE, allow an individual's score to be compared to the performance of a norm group—that is, a comparison group of individuals who have taken the test. So if a student answers 15 items correctly on the Form 7, Level D version of the Reading Subtest, the examiner can compare that to the performance of others who have taken this particular test. Thus, the TABE and the

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ABLE are referred to as *norm-referenced* assessments.

Other standardized assessments, such as the CASAS assessments and the BEST, set a required level of performance and interpret scores in relation to that standard, or criterion. Such criterion-referenced assessments may require, for example, that a student answer at least eight items out of 10 correctly, or 80%, on a particular section of an assessment in order to demonstrate knowledge of the area that the section measures. CASAS assessments and the BEST are competency-based assessments; that is, they assess the extent to which students have achieved a variety of competencies. So, several items may measure a particular competency, and students need to answer a certain number of items correctly—that is, reach a specific criterion—in order to demonstrate mastery of the competency.

PURPOSEFUL ASSESSMENT

Standardized and informal assessments each have their own strengths and weaknesses. Standardized assessments allow comparisons to be made among groups of students, both within programs and across programs. This is because they involve standard procedures in administration, scoring, and interpretation, are demonstrably reliable and valid, and use standards of comparison to make sense of assessment data. However, because they define the trait or characteristic they measure from a particular perspective (for example, reading as a particular set of skills, as in the TABE, or as particular list of competencies, as in CASAS), practitioners may feel that standardized assessments are limited. Practitioners may be uncomfortable with the relevance of these assessments to students' needs or their ability to demonstrate students' progress. Particular standardized assessments, especially skills-based assessments such as TABE and ABLE, may bring back unpleasant memories of school experiences to students.

Informal assessments may be selected or developed to match students' and programs' needs and goals. They can closely track and document development of skills or movement toward students' and instructors' goals. Informal assessments can thus link very closely with instructional activities. They can be used to monitor and direct the effectiveness of instructional activities on a frequent basis. They can give students a say in assessing progress toward their own goals. Students may thus come to better appreciate reasons for assessment, or at least feel less threatened by it. However, the fact that informal assessments are not applied in standard ways, using standard sets of materials and procedures, makes demonstrating their reliability, validity, and comparability very difficult. They should, therefore, not be used to make comparisons across students or programs.

Because of their individual strengths and weaknesses, each type of assessment (standardized or informal) can be best used to address certain stakeholder questions and purposes for assessment. Gathering information for screening and placement of learners may be done informally or through the use of standardized assessments, if a particular standardized assessment provides a good match with the program's instructional approach and orientation. Information that instructors need to diagnose student needs and to gauge related progress may be gathered through standardized assessments, again if they provide a good match with instructional approaches. However, for the reasons noted above, informal assessment procedures can be particularly useful to instructors and students for these purposes. In contrast, student progress as it relates to questions of accountability is best answered through standardized assessments. Standardized assessments, for the reasons noted above, allow stakeholders to make sense of students' progress and standing by providing standards of comparison (norms or pre-established criteria).

ABLE staff can approach learner assessment mindful of the various stakeholder questions, purposes for assessment, and strengths and weaknesses of the assessments and approaches to assessment. They can use this information to choose assessments and gather assessment information in ways that help them to serve in their most critical role—guiding and assisting their learners to success—while providing information that answers the needs of other program stakeholders as well.■

RECOMMENDED READING ON LEARNER ASSESSMENT AND COMPETENCIES

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Learner competencies help link instruction to assessment

by Barbara Van Horn

Discussion about adult learner competencies, competency-based assessments, and adult learner outcomes are not new. Current interest in competencies, however, focuses on several intertwined areas of concern to adult educators: need for improved program accountability, changes in adult education legislation and funding, and concerns about the effectiveness of current adult curricula and assessment practices. Several states have undertaken initiatives to develop statewide adult learner competencies that are used to plan program improvements and guide assessment. The National Institute for Literacy's Equipped for the Future initiative also is designing a standards-based system for reform that focuses on adults' roles and purposes for learning.

Pennsylvania's adult learner competencies focus on basic communication, numeracy, higher-order, and extended literacy skills. This approach provides a framework for:

- reflecting on instructional and assessment practices and developing program improvement plans;
- focusing on skill development and skill transfer across contexts;
- designing contextualized curricula that embed skill development and applications within adult contexts; and
- linking curricula to program assessment plans.

Finally, the competencies provide the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education with a framework that can be used to expand efforts to document learner gains and, ultimately, contribute to improved accountability procedures for ABLE programs.

The adult learner competencies are listed in three levels: basic or Level 1 (grade equivalent 0-4), intermediate or Level 2 (grade equivalent 5-8), and advanced or Level 3 (grade equivalent 9+) skill achievement. Competencies in each level represent skill goals that learners should accomplish before progressing to the next level; they describe skills that learners are striving toward rather than where the learners are currently functioning. Progress can be measured through the standardized assessments with which the competencies are linked and through informal measures documenting the learner's ability to apply selected skills in various contexts.

Within each level, competencies are organized by communication (i.e., reading, listening, writing, and speaking), numeracy, higher-order, and extended literacy skills, which are based on SCANS competencies (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills; see below). Skills may be repeated throughout levels, since learners tend to refine and expand their proficiency throughout the educational process. For example, adults at Level 1 in reading may learn and practice basic comprehension strategies; however, application of the strategies will become more complex as they apply skills to more difficult materials and topics.

To be most effective, these skill competencies should be applied in adult contexts (i.e., family, work, community). Instructors are encouraged to think in terms of contextual education to address learners' knowledge, skills needs, and interests. This perspective has several benefits for learners:

- **Instruction is based on adults' desire for access to relevant and useful information.** The skills competencies are not meant to be a checklist; they are meant to be used as a tool to assist in reconceptualizing ABLE curricula and effective practice. Program staff can use the competencies as a framework to support instruction focused on teaching basic skills within contexts meaningful and applicable to adults' lives.
- **Although the basic skills provide an instructional focus, these skills are learned within a relevant and meaningful context.** This approach supports both learners' and practitioners' instructional needs. Learning and improving skills involve extensive practice. Many adults are more interested in learning to complete specific tasks related to daily living than in practicing skills—even when practicing the skills would help them be more successful in completing the selected task. The context, therefore, provides motivation and sustains interest. On the other hand, teaching individuals to perform a task can present obstacles for instructors since several skills are often embedded in the task. Instructors may find it difficult to identify the underlying skills necessary for completing the task successfully. In addition, it is often difficult to identify the learners' skill strengths and weaknesses based on their ability to perform the task. For example, if learners cannot interpret medicine labels, does it mean that they cannot decode the words, understand the vocabulary or measurements, or comprehend the sequence of instructions? Therefore, instructors can improve their practice by focusing on building proficiency in the underlying skills within a context that interests the learners.
- **Targeting specific skills and their application in different contexts fosters skill transfer.** Adult learners can improve their ability to transfer the application of skills to different contexts through practice. Therefore, instructors might provide learners with opportunities to apply specific skills competencies learned in one context (e.g. family-related problem-solving) to a workplace or community context. Instructors also can support this transfer through modeling and direct instruction to make connections between the skills and contexts explicit.

The adult learner competencies developed in Pennsylvania focus on the skills of adults who are native speakers of English. Providers who work with adults for whom English is a second language will find connections between these lists and competencies traditionally taught in ESL programs; however, they should consult the results of previous work on ESL-specific competencies.

Instruction and assessment should be closely linked if programs expect learner accomplishments to be evident in assessment results. Program staff should carefully review their program's goals and instructional plans and processes when considering adoption of specific assessment instruments. The competency lists can provide a tool for exploring possible links between these two educational components.■

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'Equipped for the Future' and accountability

by Sondra Stein

The '90s have seen a heightened interest in accountability at both the state and federal levels. *Equipped for the Future* (EFF) is the National Institute for Literacy's (NIFL) effort to address this concern by developing a framework for accountability that enables us to define and count our successes—as teachers, as programs, and as a system—in terms that: 1) reflect the real needs of learners, 2) reflect what we really teach in our classes, 3) make sense to members of the communities in which our programs operate, and 4) make sense to our funders and policymakers.

EFF began as a partnership between NIFL and the National Education Goals Panel to develop a clear, measurable picture of the National Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Goal: "By the year 2000, every adult will be literate, and possess the knowledge and skills requisite to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."

Our first step was to ask adult learners around the country to tell us what achievement of this goal looked like in their lives. Their answers focused us on four fundamental purposes for learning:

Equipped for the Future content and performance standards are the next step in developing a framework for accountability.

Access, Voice, Independent Action, and Bridge to the Future. Their responses also pushed us to take a closer, more systematic look at how broad social and economic changes were impacting adults' daily responsibilities as parents, citizens, and workers. With their help, and that of hundreds of other adults around the country, we created "role maps" that reflect a consensus vision of how adult roles *are* changing, and what new skills and new levels of competence they require. This vision is the basis of the EFF Content Framework for Adult Learning. It focuses us on the knowledge and skills adults need to achieve the four purposes in relation to their roles as workers, parents and family members, citizens and community members. This is why we say that EFF focuses on results that matter.

RESULTS THAT MATTER

Right now, the K-12 system provides the most commonly used framework for measuring and reporting success in adult literacy and basic skills. That framework focuses on building a step-by-step foundation of skills and knowledge that will enable young people to carry out their adult responsibilities in the future. It is not appropriate for measuring and reporting success for adult students who are interested in *applied learning at a functional level that enables them to be effective in carrying out their responsibilities right now—as well as in the future.* This framework does not enable us to count much of the learning that goes on in our classrooms and tutorials, since there is no room here for the self-development, goal setting, and interpersonal skill development that are critical for adults who need to "take responsibility for assuring work quality, safety, and results" at work; "participate in group processes and decision making" as a citizen; "support children's formal education" and "provide opportunities for each family member to experience success" as a parent/family member. These are, truly, results that matter to learners and communities and funders.

A desire to focus more directly on such results has led a number of states to move away from the K-12 framework, and take a competency-based approach to assessment and instruction. This makes sense, instructionally, since it breaks down learning into manageable chunks. Learners can see success. What they can't see is the big picture—where this individual success "fits" in terms of broader role competence. That's what the EFF Framework adds to competency-based approaches. If we thought about the hundreds of individual competencies within the CASAS framework as pieces in a jigsaw puzzle, we could say that the EFF role maps and content framework provide the picture on the puzzle box that enables a learner to define the outlines of competence so that he or she can fill in the pieces to build effective role performance.

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Equipped for the Future content and performance standards are the next step in developing a framework for accountability. Content standards will embody the vision of what adult literacy programs can achieve in clear, measurable objectives that describe the knowledge and skills that are both necessary and sufficient for effective performance across a wide variety of adult life contexts. Adults who demonstrate they can meet the standards will not just have a set of basic skills. They will have skills they can apply in carrying out their roles as citizens, parents, and workers. That's what we mean by delivering results that matter.

Twenty-five literacy programs in 12 states—including Pennsylvania—are working with NIFL as development partners. By using the standards and standards framework in their programs, they will help us figure out how to make the standards useful and appropriate tools for teaching and learning, as well as for assessing progress and success.

The result of all this work will be an accountability framework for the adult literacy and basic skills field that enables us to focus measurement and reporting—as well as assessment and instruction—on results that matter to adult learners, communities, employers, funders, and policymakers. If the framework makes sense, then programs will be able to use it as the basis for their reporting requirements. At that point EFF will move from a framework for teaching, learning, and assessment to one that enables and encourages system reform.

What does this mean? Having agreed as a field on which results are important to achieve, our field can focus our energies and resources on determining and putting in place the conditions that favor achievement of those results for more adult learners. We will have an accountability framework that enables us to measure results that matter and to continually fine-tune our programs to make them more effective. We'll have the data to show Congress how well we are doing but, even more important, we will see the results of our work, in more and more adults with the skills and knowledge to be effective. That's the real goal of *Equipped for the Future*. ■

Research to practice in adult education: the promise and the reality

by Judith A. Alamprese

Research is a word with many interpretations. From the viewpoint of the social scientist, research is a process that uses the scientific method in solving puzzling problems and resolving unanswered questions (Leedy, 1980). Research usually begins with a question and demands the identification of a problem that is stated in clear, unambiguous terms. It also requires a plan and deals with facts and their meaning.

Research can take many forms. In adult education, the federal government funds congressionally mandated evaluations of programs such as Even Start and the National Workplace Literacy Program, as well as studies of best practices, such as the current projects to examine promising programs that serve Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) learners. Foundations also support adult education research, such as studies of state infrastructures for family literacy and studies of workplace literacy. Occasionally, states support modest research studies with their Adult Education Act (AEA) Section 353 monies.

In the recent past, adult educators have become interested in the ways in which research findings and the research process can be used to improve practice and promote a dialogue among practitioners. This attention to research has been prompted by several factors—the call for data to document program outcomes, the desire among practitioners to address program issues and solve problems in a systematic way, and researchers' yearning to apply their findings to practical problems. For adult educators, practice usually concerns some component of the operation of a program, including recruitment, instruction, assessment, and referral to other services. Increasingly, practitioners are concerned about the ways in which they can improve their work in these areas using information they gather themselves as well as that produced through studies.

THE PROMISE

One example of a research process that practitioners are using to identify a question about their program, gather and analyze data, and identify possible actions is the work they are undertaking in Pennsylvania's Project EQUAL. In EQUAL, the program's instructional staff work in teams to tackle pressing problems in one or more aspects of program operations. For example, staff may question why learners are not being retained in programs. In identifying the causes of this problem, they may examine attendance data to identify patterns of participation by time of day, location of services, and subgroup of learners. Furthermore, they may gather additional data through a survey of learners who are no longer enrolled to ask their reasons for leaving the program. In analyzing these data, the staff may find that the problem is isolated by time of day or location or that it's program-wide. Depending on the results of this analysis, the staff will determine steps to increase learner participation by offering classes at different times of the day or in another location, or by providing staff development to instructors whose teaching may not be engaging learners.

The area of learner assessment has been a topic of interest to staff participating in EQUAL. As programs report data to meet the performance standards developed by the Bureau of Adult Education, they realize the importance of collecting reliable and valid information from learners. The EQUAL teams have reviewed their processes for administering and scoring learner assessment instruments, and provided staff development to ensure the proper use of these assessments. These programs also have

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examined their database systems to facilitate the retrieval of learner information that can be used by program staff in serving learners more effectively.

The process of convening staff in teams and identifying critical questions about a program is an effective means of engaging practitioners in the problem identification, data collection and analysis, problem-solving cycle of applied research. As staff identify a pressing problem or issue, they first hypothesize about the causes based on their observations and experiences. However, they also enhance their observations through the systematic review of existing data or the collection of new information that may be relevant to the issue under discussion. Through the analysis of these data, staff may begin to view the problem from a different perspective which, in turn, may prompt the identification of action steps that they previously had not thought about. As EQUAL participants have reported, this process has energized them and given them new tools for program improvement.

THE REALITY

EQUAL is one example of the use of research to influence practice. Another strategy is for practitioners to review the research that has been synthesized, such as the briefs that are produced by the ERIC Clearinghouses to identify practices for program improvement derived from research findings. During the past year, the U.S. Department of Education has raised questions about the ways in which research can be used by practitioners, including the forms that research findings should take to be helpful to practitioners and the most effective methods for disseminating this information. This interest is based on the realization that operating adult education programs is a daunting task, and that there can be a value added if programs can access information that has been empirically derived from the systematic study of adult education program operations.

There are two major challenges that must be met for practitioners to have better information to guide their practice. One is for the funding agencies to develop a coordinated set of studies, whereby one study builds upon or extends the knowledge produced from others. Too often, studies on the same topic are funded in isolation so that they do not extend a line of inquiry. Better coordination of research would result in a stronger body of knowledge to guide practice. The second challenge is for the researchers. More attention needs to be given to the ways in which research findings are written and disseminated. Often, studies are focused on a subpopulation of learners or a specific aspect of program operations. If researchers are clear about their target audiences and the lessons learned, there is greater likelihood that their work will be useful to practitioners and, in turn, helpful to the adult education system as a whole.

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LEARNING OUTSIDE THE BOX

by Linda Herr

When adults come to an ABE/literacy provider for help, it is rarely because they have a burning desire to learn just for pleasure. Adults choose to learn when that learning will be transferable and applicable to a particular facet of their lives.

How then does a tutor or teacher determine the appropriateness of materials to use during this learning experience? While many providers generally have a set curriculum, the tacit expectation is that the bulk of learning time will be centered on the prescribed curriculum—the "box." However, if that curriculum does not meet the needs and expectations of the learner, the learning experience will be less than successful.

To determine materials outside the core, it is imperative that the tutor or teacher ascertain the learner's personal and educational goals. There should be mutual engagement in this process, with the tutor or teacher assisting in determining manageable, short-term goals in order to reach the long-term goals. Determine a time frame for accomplishment of short-term goals. Make a list of these goals to track progress and accomplishments.

WHERE TO START?

Preparation involves not only the determination of goals, but what materials are accessible and appropriate to reach those goals. What materials might the learner have that he or she already needs to know how to use in daily living or on the job?

- Take inventory of what materials are available. Are there workbooks or worksheets in stock that relate to a particular competency?
- Determine if the materials are appropriate to the articulated goal. Is the material too difficult or too easy for the learner? Are concepts presented and developed at a comfortable pace for the learner?
- If appropriate materials are not available, be creative—and consider real-life materials.
- Games and activities are useful tools to use to complement learning.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Real-life materials can be as varied as individual needs and goals. For learners needing reading and/or math skills, a set curriculum is fine; however, explore the other possibilities for transferable skills acquisition. Begin to think outside the box.

- Use the newspaper to teach scanning for information.
- Use newspaper or magazine articles to locate words for further study or words found in the curriculum. (Does context change the meaning of these words?)
- Use solicitation letters to teach critical-thinking skills—distinguishing fact from claim (fiction), playing to emotions, etc.
- Use the telephone book for alphabetization skills.
- Create a personal phone book with "need-to-know" numbers.
- Get away from the desk or worktable!!! Take a walk around town—read street and store signs, billboards, and fliers. Learn sight words while being in a real-life situation, then make flashcards of these words for

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Learning with computers

by Arlene Cianelli

It's 8:40 a.m. as I enter the downtown Pittsburgh library that houses the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council's Computer Learning Center that I coordinate. I'm early, but I'm hoping to catch up on some paperwork before my first class starts at 9:30. As I walk through the building, the library clerks' morning litany begins: "Hi, Arlene! You have people waiting."

Three of those waiting are students; the fourth is a man inquiring about our public classes. As the students boot the computers, I register the man for a four-week New Users class. (Public demand has been incredible, especially among senior citizens, and we're able to serve the public through private funding.)

Checking in with the students, I learn that Roberta needs to write a letter to her son who's preparing to move into a halfway house; Carol wants to draw a picture and write a story about a dream she had last night; Michael is feeling troubled and needs to visit "his" spiritual sites on the Internet. He is alone in the world but has discovered a community of friends online.

Carol and Michael can access their programs independently, so I settle in with Roberta, a beginning reader, to transcribe her letter. She proudly shows me that she can now enter a word-processing document on her own, but informs me that she'll probably still need help saving it to her floppy disk. The 9:30 class hasn't even arrived yet.

Thus my day begins, and it will continue in similar fashion. My two AmeriCorps members will join me later, but this morning I am on my own. My first class is Knowledge Explorers, a multilevel group. We use a model where students learn to use a word processor, then learn to navigate the Internet. Afterward, each participant chooses a topic; uses the Internet, CD-ROMs, and the library to research it; then uses the word processor to write about it. Other classes are geared to different reading levels or special populations. Some are open to the public. These mixed classes have proven to be a positive experience for our students.

My vision is that our literacy/ABE/GED students will learn to use computers for the same purposes as the rest of the adult population. We have a full range of inexpensive off-the-shelf drill-and-practice programs, but it is the general-purpose software—word processing, spreadsheet, Internet, special-topic CD-ROMs—that gets the most use. The students' progress does not always translate easily to standardized tests, but their motivation and knowledge-retention levels are higher than those normally experienced using traditional instruction methods.

There are many good reasons for incorporating computer-assisted instruction (CAI) into your adult education program. Here are some:

- Students spend more time on task.
- Students are accessing (and reading) a wide range of information.
- Students are motivated to learn and attend classes more regularly as a result.
- Students with learning differences appreciate the naturally multisensory environment of computers.
- Students' writing and artistic creativ-

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further study.

- Use school correspondence as a lesson to talk to a parent about responding to requests from teachers.
- Use materials from the world of work—job postings, memos, instructions, union notes, and work forms.
- Use a ruler.
- Use a calculator.
- Balance a checkbook.
- Add/subtract mock checkbook entries.
- Use recipes to teach liquid and dry measurement.
- Use newspaper ads or circulars to comparison shop and figure percentages.
- Use maps and keys to determine mileage between locations.
- Use schedules to determine length of time or duration.

EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Many learners' designated goals are not personal goals. Determine the strategies or methods needed to facilitate that goal attainment. For example, if employability is a goal, examine materials applicable to that goal. If materials particular to that immediate goal are not available, investigate real-life strategies to equip the learner with needed skills.

- Check newspapers for want ads.
- Practice filling out job applications.
- Practice filling out W-4 forms.
- Discuss and practice likely interview questions.
- Discuss and practice what questions he or she might want to ask in an interview.
- Discuss interview manners and conduct.
- Address math skills required for particular jobs; determine the amount of instruction needed to sustain the individual in a job using those skills.
- Discuss challenges that might occur in a place of employment and how to handle such potential challenges—the ability to "get along" can help with job retention.

READING ALL AROUND

Explore the possibilities for materials in tasks performed every day. Reading and comprehending stories in a workbook can be a marvelous accomplishment. The ability to perform and understand mathematical functions can be gratifying. However, there must be a connection, application, and transfer of the skills learned to the lives of our learners if they are to be adequately prepared to face the continued demands for learning and training to stay abreast of the current trends and demands of today's world. Any related tools, strategies, or activities can be structured to interface with any concept presented within set curriculum and yield transferable skills that make learning relevant. Learning outside the box that is relevant to the real world prepares our students to embark on the course to lifelong learning.

See my "Desert Island Books" on page 54 for a list of key resources.■

Teaching basic literacy to adults

by Amy Wilson

Researchers say that success is the strongest motivator; successful outcomes motivate more effort. The goal—literacy—can be defined as, "the ability to read and write; self-sufficiency; hope; the shortest distance to individual, social and economic development." Many educators also include numeracy as part of basic literacy. With approximately 20% of Pennsylvania's adults reading below a fifth-grade level, effective literacy instruction is paramount to the success of our society. To promote successful literacy gains, the key factors of environment, assessment, materials, and instruction must be carefully coordinated.

Building a trusting relationship among learners, literacy programs, and tutors/teachers is the first step. It's within a feeling of safety that adult learners are willing to take risks. Trust and learning success help adults overcome feelings of fear, shame, or apprehension they often feel when they enter literacy programs. Many learners have had negative "school" experiences; for example, one adult had been locked in a closet through part of his first-grade year. Or there may have been physical problems (uncorrected vision or hearing difficulties), learning disabilities, lack of school attendance, constant moving (migrant workers), drug use, stress, boredom, childhood illness, or trauma. To encourage learning success, programs create a relaxed, friendly, learner-centered environment. All stages of learners' interaction are important, from their reception to learning sessions to final goal accomplishment. Interactions and relationships can affect learners' motivation, confidence, and willingness to communicate thoughts and needs. To determine the most effective instructional strategies, the program must become knowledgeable about each unique learner.

START WITH ASSESSMENT

Most literacy programs perform a thorough assessment of the learner's goals, learning strategies and styles, knowledge gaps (such as not knowing phonetics or spelling rules), and level of skill, before matching teaching strategies to learners. All instruction is planned to help the learners accomplish their goals. The learners' general goals are to read and write better. However, specific goals may include accurately completing forms and applications, reading medicine prescriptions, helping children with homework, passing the driver's license test, reading a bus schedule, taking phone messages, or ordering from a menu. Long-term goals may be to get a better job, qualify for a training program, or pass the GED test. Each individual's unique goals are important, and are incorporated into the materials and instructional methods.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Materials and instruction must be sensitive to the diverse needs of adult learners. Dependent upon the learner's needs, a variety of materials and instructional methods may be used: reading texts, vocabulary texts, real forms, etc. All methods support the theory of teaching from the known to the unknown. The teaching strategies also encourage development of the characteristics of a good reader. A good reader is an active participant, bringing what he knows to the page (prior knowledge), adjusting her rate depending on the difficulty or ease of the material (adaptability), reading on for help (context), expecting the material to make sense (comprehension), taking risks (self-challenge), etc. Methods include the language experience approach, sight vocabulary instruction, phonics instruction, prereading strategies to increase reading comprehension, the directed reading-thinking activity (DRTA), study skills and memory techniques, spelling rules, brainstorming for writing ideas, mapping ideas, etc. Repetition, review, and the transfer of learning to daily life skills reinforce learning and its value.

The language experience approach to learning emphasizes using the learner's spoken language to teach reading. The tutor/teacher asks the learner a question such as, "How was your fishing trip last weekend? Tell me about it." The tutor writes down (prints) exactly what the learner says and then reads it back to the learner. Changes to the text can be made. Finally, the tutor and learner read the text together line by line. The text can also be used to teach phonics, punctuation, and word patterns. An advantage of the language experience approach is that the text is familiar and interesting to the learner.

Teaching sight vocabulary—words to be recognized instantly—may involve several techniques: matching pictures to words; teaching meaning and using context; breaking words into parts, then combining the parts; teaching words in groups (*cat, bat sat, mat*); using flashcards to practice. One learner knew three words when he entered a literacy program. He recognized his first and last name, and the word *stop*. After increasing his sight vocabulary, he was ready to begin learning phonics.

Phonics—letter-sound association—is best taught using words already familiar to the learner. Learners need a key word to help them remember the letter-sound association. For instance, a learner recognizes *bat, bird,* and *bug*. One of those words can become the key word to remind them what sound the "b" makes. Many texts also use key words

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ity can be integrated easily.

- Students can self-correct mistakes.
- Students can better relate to their techno-savvy kids.

Most of all, they can feel proud of their method of learning: for once in their lives, they are ahead of the crowd.

If you would like some assistance with incorporating CAI into your program, talk to your PDC Coordinator. A statewide network of technology resource staff has been trained to help you with computer-related issues from technology plans to software selection to staff training. Someone in your area is prepared to help you meet your technology goals.■

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to teach phonics. Learners should memorize, use, and review the key words. Most learners find phonics to be important to improving their reading skills; however, occasionally, a learner can't hear the sounds. If you suspect an auditory discrimination problem, there are simple tests available. Can he hear the difference between *bad* and *bed?* Approximately 85% of the English language is phonetically patterned. Knowledge of phonics gives learners a problem-solving skill when they encounter unfamiliar words.

Increased vocabulary recognition increases reading comprehension; however, prereading strategies and the DRTA also significantly increase comprehension. Prereading strategies include encouraging the learner to list what she knows about the subject, providing an overview of the subject verbally, and asking questions. Listing brings out prior knowledge, an overview provides knowledge and context, and questions stimulate curiosity and set a purpose for reading. The DRTA uses questions and intermittent discussion throughout the reading process while encouraging critical thinking. Reading skills are strengthened by writing practice.

Key methods to teach writing emphasize the process of writing. The acronym *POWER* represents: *p*rewrite, *o*rganize, *w*rite, *e*dit, *r*ewrite. Tutors/teachers provide a trigger for writing—a photo, video clip, conversation about a recent event, list of facts, etc. Learners brainstorm ideas and then make decisions concerning how to organize their thoughts. Organizational strategies include chronological, spatial, topical, problem-solution, and cause-and-effect. Learners at beginning literacy levels may write a list of things to do inside the house vs. outside of the house as a way to practice organization.

Finally, encourage study skills and memory techniques—the factors that influence learning. Managing time and stress, along with keeping a record of successes enhance all teaching and learning. The role of the literacy program is to provide a safe environment, ongoing assessment of learners' needs and skills, and effective instruction through trained staff.■

Reading in the content areas: off to a good start

by Lynette Hazelton

Several years ago I began working for a literacy program as a writing instructor. Separate reading classes were handled by another teacher. We collaborated, but not nearly as much or as closely as we should have.

However, the program restructured, and reading and writing became one class taught by one instructor. And so, for the first time, I became a reading *and* writing teacher.

There is a tendency, I think, to forget just how abstract an art form reading is. Words bound together by the intricate rules of grammar, punctuation, and spelling form complex ideas that produce meaning within us. To move fluently from the unknown to the known merely through the written word is a major feat.

But these are the musings that come with hindsight. At the time I was asked to teach reading, I didn't know these things, so I wasn't intimidated by the additional responsibility. In fact, I thought it should be easy to teach reading. After all, I would merely be sharing with the students the stuff I most liked to read.

For the first class, I selected the autobiography *Kaffir Boy*, by Mark Mathabane. Set in South Africa in the 1960s, the book chronicles the life of a young African boy as he attempts to rise above the cruel restrictions of apartheid. Fascinating stuff; yet it was a sullen disaster instructionally. Nevertheless, students who weren't the least interested in Mathabane's account were otherwise reading. One day a student whipped out the *Philadelphia Daily News*, scrutinizing the car ads. I had students who were connoisseurs of Avon and Victoria Secret's catalogs and supermarket tabloids. They were reading, but they just had no interest in what I was assigning.

Based on that observation and others, I've attempted to craft a program that works for adult students. Here are some of the things that help me get a reading class started on a positive note:

1. Assess reading attitudes. Give students time, preferably at the start of a new class, to openly discuss in a group their reading experiences. During this discovery time, jump-start the conversation with such questions as why they read, what they like to read, what they hate to read, and their school-based experiences with learning to read.

Listen most carefully for what they consider a "good" reader.

Join the discussion. I tell honestly of my earlier dislike of anything remotely resembling "good literature" as a high school student. Talking about reading as an interesting experience will allow you to assess the classroom's reading beliefs.

2. Always develop reading expectations jointly. Critical reading takes time, but simply assuming students would take the time proved wrongheaded, and telling them to take time was ineffective. I learned I had to develop expectations collaboratively.

Therefore, I start each new term with a simple exercise. I randomly hand out the paperback books we have about the class. The assignment is to read the first page and only the first page. Then we discuss whether or not they would like to continue.

Students must develop the awareness that reading a recipe and reading a poem are different reading experiences, each with its own set of expectations and requiring its own set of skills.

Students seem shocked by the question. Although they routinely make these decisions in their personal lives, they rarely have an opportunity to give up on a reading without penalty in their academic lives.

And almost without exception, my students—even those initially turned off by their books—say that they can't make a decision until they give it more time. One page isn't enough to judge the

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HAZELTON *Continued from page 29*
merits of a work. So we as a class decide how much time we should give a reading before we give up on it.

3. Step into your students' world. Reading comprehension requires context understanding: the geographical, social, political, and historical backdrop upon which the words are written. I now know that *Kaffir Boy* demanded a contextual understanding that students had not developed and thus there was a student-reading disconnect.

Too many disconnects early on can doom a reading class.

To prevent this in the early days, step into your students' world. If, for example, Victoria Secret's catalog is getting a lot of attention, use it as your class text.

Draw students' attention to the copy. For example, ask "What's the tone?" "How many different ways can you describe women's underwear?" "Who does it appeal to?" "What's the difference between the writing in Victoria Secret and the writing in another catalog?"

Take the students further. For instance, bring in pictures that show and articles that discuss the difference between underwear ads 30 years ago and today.

Of course, now that you have their attention, enthusiasm, and willingness to read, the sky's the limit.

4. GED and reading. For many students, getting a GED is a major motivation for attending class and doing their assignments. This is the good news.

The bad news is that students often judge your curriculum based on how well it relates to the GED. No matter how creative you are, if they judge it lacking, they may vote with their feet. I've learned that ultimately students want the class to be relevant.

Therefore, give your reading assignments an added dimension by connecting them to the GED. The GED is essentially a reading comprehension test that requires reading quickly and accurately. Often in class we only practice critical reading and inference, setting up a problematic mismatch between what they get and what they need. Often students have only a few reading skills and try to apply them to every situation. Find a balance between the two extremes.

I believe in explicit discussions about the reading process. Students must develop the awareness that reading a recipe and reading a poem are different reading experiences, each with its own set of expectations and requiring its own set of skills.

Finally, unless your program has a separate test-taking class, help students by frequently giving them timed GED-like practice reading tests. The discussion that follows the test is critical. Facilitate a discussion that not only provides the right answers, but also reveals why students missed a question. Did they read too fast? Did they misunderstand the question? Did they not understand the passage? Did they guess wrong? Often, wrong answers give more insight into a student than the correct answer.

Also you should discuss anxiety and how to deal with it, how to handle distractions as well as concrete test-taking tips such as reading directions carefully, answering every questions, and reading over the questions first.■

PEER MENTORING: STUDENTS HELPING STUDENTS

by Sue Snider

Once adult students have made up their minds to continue or enhance their education, there may come a time early on in the experience when life may not cooperate. No matter how dedicated they may be, students will always encounter those contingencies that separate adult education from secondary education, namely adult responsibilities. Many students enter into a literacy program with the best of intentions without considering that there may be a time when family, monetary, health, or job-related issues can make it almost impossible to follow through on those intentions.

Students need to be made aware of the fact that four to six weeks into a program, when the newness begins to wear off, they might experience some doubt as to why they're even in the program. Peer mentoring can be a valuable tool for both the student and the tutor.

At Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, there is a student fellowship group comprised of students who either are currently in the program or have recently "graduated" to other goals. One of their most important functions is peer mentoring. Through our area offices, students and tutors are made aware of this service, just in case difficulties arise. When a student's name is given to a fellowship member, he or she contacts the student. Because fellowship members have experienced many of the same difficulties, they are usually able to allay any fears and get the students back on track.

Students feel less threatened when contacted by a peer. Usually, all the troubled students need to hear is that they can and will survive the rough spots. Students will tell other students more about themselves and their problems than they will convey to their tutor. Our peer mentors are able to relay their personal experiences to those they help. If a particular problem calls for some social-service intervention, then the student is referred to a professional staff member. Only literacy-related problems, those with which the mentors are familiar, are handled over the phone.

Sometimes it is suggested that the student talk with the tutor and share these problems. This solution eases the learning situation and helps the student take an active rather than a passive role in his or her educational choices.

The students' initial orientation reminds them to avail themselves of this service, but until they are actually experiencing problems, they usually don't. The feelings of being overwhelmed and inadequate seem to be lessened just by the initial phone call. This experience has returned the students to their tutors and sessions on a regular basis with the knowledge that they are not alone and that help is just a phone call away.■

Teaching math so our students learn it

by Ellen McDevitt

Math just doesn't make sense to many of our students. If they can handle it at all it is frequently at the most basic level of single-digit computation. Add to this low-level functioning a high level of math anxiety and you have a situation where learning doesn't occur. The challenge to us as instructors is to teach our adult students so that math makes sense to them and so they can apply it when they need it. How do we do that?

The simple answer is that we must not teach as we were taught. All of our students have had years of formal math instruction in K-12 classrooms, and they still cannot "do math." The traditional regimen of rules, drill and practice, and timed tests didn't work the first time around and it isn't likely to work now—and yet we still conduct classes using that model. Students are taught rules and formulas and given pages of problems for practice. As instructors we anticipate that this sequence of activities will lead to mastery of the skills we've taught. In reality, it leads to mastery of skills in the isolated activities we've focused on in practice. Students leave class with no real understanding of what they've done, why they did it, or what it means in real life. As a result, students are unable to apply what they've learned to other problems and situations. Is it any wonder, then, that our students can't make sense of math? If we want our students to actually use the math we teach them, we must change our practice. We need to shift our thinking from how to teach math to how our students learn math.

1. Focus on math as problem solving. Our students solve problems every day, even if they don't make the connection between the skills they're using and what we ask them to do in math class. Too often they think of "math" as simply "getting the right answer." We need to shift the focus from getting the answer to the process of solving the problem. It's the process that helps students make sense of math. For example, in a typical unit on geometry we would teach the formula for the area of a rectangle, $a = b \times h$, and we would give our students lots of problems to solve as practice. But how much more valuable would it be to help students discover why the formula is $a = b \times h$? Let them first estimate the size of a rectangular room. Then have them form groups to measure the room and check whether their estimates were correct. Next lead them to understand what the area of a plane means by relating it to the need to carpet or tile the surface. Next have them each create a scale drawing of the area of the floor as they see it. Finally, ask the groups to reform and compare individual findings. Do they see patterns? Can they write a formula to express those patterns? This kind of exploration takes students from the concrete to the representational to the abstract level of understanding.

2. Let students explain what they did and how they did it. Communication about math is often neglected in our instruction, but it can be the critical factor in developing understanding. For example, how do you solve the following problem? *My brother bought 48 rolls of toilet paper for $7.50. How much will a package of 4 be? If a package of 4 is usually $1.00, how much did he save?*

One student might divide 48 by 4 to get 12 packages of 4, and then divide $7.50 by 12 to get a per package price. Another might divide $7.50 by 48 to get a per roll cost, and then multiply by 4 to get a per package cost. Still another student might solve it by setting up a ratio such as:

$$\frac{\$7.50}{48} = \frac{x}{4}$$

Each student came to an answer in a different way that made sense to him. In a typical math lesson, we wouldn't even know that several different processes had been used. We would ask for the answer and move on to the next problem. But by asking students to explain themselves and their reasoning, we help them do two things: develop their own sense of how to solve problems and have confidence in their own abilities to do so.

3. Give your students time to work out their own solutions. In a typical math classroom, the instructor poses a problem to the group, someone calls out the answer, the instructor asks if there are any questions and moves on to the next problem. This practice stops the process of problem solving. Everyone in the class is waiting for someone to answer the question so they don't have to! How much more beneficial would it be to pose a question and prohibit anyone from giving an answer until everyone has arrived at a solution? After all students have completed their exploration of the problem, the instructor can give the answer and ask, "Who got that answer? Explain to us "How did you do it?" and "Why did you choose that way?" Somewhere we developed the idea that it makes more sense to practice one way of solving a problem over and over again on lots of different problems. But it is a much richer experience educationally to allow students time to explore one problem and to find many different solutions to it. Students develop confidence in their ability to solve problems and they are better able to transfer that learning to other situations.

We need to shift our thinking from how to teach math to how our students learn math.

4. Work in groups. Regularly assign problems to be explored by students working in groups rather than alone. Group work encourages students to explain themselves and to defend their solutions, developing confidence in their own problem-solving abilities. Individual students may be more willing to risk giving an answer within the protection of the group and less afraid to explain themselves. Adult students who are especially math-anxious may find their confidence growing within the group. Different students in a group are likely to solve problems in different ways, and the verbal interaction in the group can help each member learn from the others.

If you can incorporate these suggestions, your classroom will become a laboratory for learning and your students will become more math-confident adults.■

GED in Pennsylvania

by Larry Goodwin

The tests of the General Educational Development (GED) were first developed in 1942 to provide World War II veterans an opportunity to earn a high school credential. The purpose of the current program is to offer all adults a second chance for a diploma. The tests are constructed to measure the outcomes and concepts of a four-year program of high school education in the core content areas of Arts and Literature, English and essay writing, Social Studies, Science, and Math. Approximately 800,000 people test each year nationwide with more than 26,000 testing in Pennsylvania. Last year 19,162 Pennsylvania adults earned a Commonwealth Diploma by passing the test.

Any Pennsylvania resident above the age of 18 who does not possess a high school credential may take the GED test and, upon passing, receive a diploma. Persons 16 and 17 years of age may qualify to test if they meet certain waiverable conditions having to do with prerequisites for work, military service, or postsecondary educational opportunities, and candidates must be signed out of school. Waivers must be requested in writing to the Chief Examiner.

The GED testing program in Pennsylvania is part of the national program operated under the guidance of the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education. The GED Testing Service staff develops all tests under a continuous program that ensures different tests are introduced each year. The annual exchange of tests, along with a strong emphasis on test security and standardized testing procedures, are the backbone of the credibility effort. Also, periodically the Testing Service conducts a "norming" evaluation with the participation of graduating high school seniors from schools across the nation. This study allows the GED staff to accurately establish a passing score that equates to a score made by a graduating high school senior who has shown competency in the core content areas listed above. The minimum passing score to receive a Commonwealth Diploma is 225 total points, with a minimum score of 40 on each of the five core content subtests. To determine if candidates are ready to take the GED test, instructors are encouraged to use an official practice test. The results will indicate areas of strength and weakness and will help guide further test preparation.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

Candidates with learning, physical, or emotional disabilities may qualify for special testing accommodations. These accommodations are not meant to give an unfair advantage to a candidate with disabilities but to give those who are intellectually capable a fair opportunity to pass. In 1997, more than 80 accommodations were granted to Pennsylvania candidates. Most accommodations approved were either for additional time or for the use of the audiocassette edition of the test. These two accommodations are normally granted to candidates who have dyslexia or reading difficulties associated with attention deficit problems. Other accommodations include frequent breaks, a private room, a scribe, or a Braille edition. The most disapproved request for an accommodation is for use of a calculator. The candidate must have dyscalculia to be granted the use of a calculator. Questions concerning special accommodations should be referred to the local Chief Examiner.

Within Pennsylvania, there are 79

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AN ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA FOR ADULTS

by Samuel Gruber

In 1976 the Cumberland Valley School District, wanting to provide a "second chance" for adults who had not completed high school, initiated a High School Diploma Program for Adults in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In the program, known as AchievE, participants are awarded the exact same diploma as a CVSD graduate.

The staff is the key to AchievE's success. A stable and focused faculty serve as a:

- "one-stop" initiative to provide needed educational services;
- partner in this nontraditional student program;
- "guide on the side" for the student's completion of life skills and standards for obtaining an in-depth knowledge of the student's community pertinent to participation in the workforce; and
- facilitator in fulfilling the same standards as graduating seniors, predicated on the school district's strategic plan and the new state regulations.

The program consists of two phases: completion of successful academic achievement and completion of life skills in the areas of Consumer Economics, Community Resources, Government and Law, Health, Occupations, Global Studies, and Oral and Written Communications.

The program is flexible and individualized to meet the needs of each learner. It is portfolio oriented, allowing students to adjust to time constraints. It also meets needs not afforded by the GED. All branches of the military, registered nursing programs, and Pennsylvania State Police accept the diploma.

Many businesses are forming partnerships in this endeavor, due to AchievE's life-skills facet. Hershey Foods, Walmart, and Highmark not only encourage employees to participate in the program but also provide mentoring services and financial support. The Susquehanna Employment and Training Corporation also participates and has experienced a 95% graduation rate.

Rewards from this alternative diploma program include:

- an 85% student graduation rate,
- a strong business and educational relationship,
- a source of satisfaction in being part of a program offering a "second chance" to community members desiring to earn a regular high school di-

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The challenges and rewards of teaching ESL to adults

by Raiana Mearns

Warning: Teaching ESL can be addictive. Those of us who have been in the field know how fun, how frustrating, and how fruitful it can be. Teaching ESL (English as a second language) is relating to another human being in the most basic of ways—language. Although your students may come from very different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, they are all lacking in one area: their ability to speak, read, write, or understand English.

There is no typical ESL student. I have taught physicians, college professors, *au pairs*, and migrant workers—sometimes in the same class. Depending on the culture and personality of the student, I have found that ESL students seem to come with far less educational "baggage" than many ABE or GED students. Teaching ESL is not a matter of teaching something that was not learned before; it is teaching and learning anew.

The challenge begins with the intake and assessment process. This may or may not be the job of the ESL practitioner; nevertheless, it is a process of which the practitioner needs to be aware. This is a most important step because the intake assessment should indicate whether the student is literate in his or her native language. ESL assessments are difficult to conduct if the student knows very little English, but they do give the practitioner a baseline from which to measure progress. Measuring educational gains with ESL students is most easily accomplished if instruction is competency based; then the accomplishment of a new skill can be documented.

Spoken communication can be divided into competencies including introductions, scheduling an appointment, and making an emergency call. As each skill is achieved, the student is able to recognize progress and revise educational goals. This feedback is important to the student, tutor/teacher, and program. The CASAS (Comprehensive Student Assessment System) is one test that measures competencies and is correlated to instructional tasks. Competencies are the backbone of "life skills" curricula that emphasize survival English first. Some programs approach language instruction linguistically, attempting to teach the mechanics of a language first. ESL instruction can be a combination of many teaching strategies that may include TPR (Total Physical Response) or conversational methods that stress fluency in spoken English before reading and writing. We all add our own methods to the mixture.

Measuring educational gains with ESL students is most easily accomplished if instruction is competency based; then the accomplishment of a new skill can be documented.

Individual tutoring allows student and tutor to work specifically on the student's goals. While this may not be feasible in a large classroom setting, it is still important. A student may only be interested in learning enough English to pass the driver's test. Unless these goals are recorded in the intake process, the tutor or teacher may be teaching irrelevant material that turns off the student. We must remember that ESL adults want success and have agendas that are often different from ours. Both student and practitioner goals should be addressed early in the instructional process. There is always room for negotiation. A planned course of study enables the student to prepare for learning. Styles of learning must be considered just as they are in any ABE or GED class. Cultural differences may affect the ways your students learn. It may not be acceptable for a student to question the

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PREPARING FOR CITIZENSHIP

by Judy Sides

Within the international community there is an increasing interest in encouraging foreign-born residents to become U.S. citizens. Adult educators need to be aware of this trend and prepared to assist those for whom obtaining citizenship is a stated goal. Possessing basic English language skills is usually one of the criteria for becoming a citizen and thus there is much adult educators can contribute to this endeavor.

It is helpful to understand the process by which people become U.S. citizens in order to see where the adult educator fits in. (Please note that there are frequent changes in the laws and thus the process is described here in a very general way.) Citizenship applicants first submit a form (N-400) along with the required fees and documents to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and wait to receive an interview notice. This currently takes about a year. At the interview, the applicant is asked questions about his/her application. The questions aren't difficult, but the situation can be intimidating for learners who lack confidence. At the time of the interview, an INS officer gives the applicant a history/civics test, which, at the present time, consists of ten questions and two dictation sentences. (Older persons meeting certain criteria are exempt from the test.) Applicants need to be knowledgeable about such topics as pivotal points in U.S. history, major historical figures, the basics of how our government is organized, and the names of individuals currently holding various offices.

Adult educators can help learners in several ways. The officer will ask questions about the application, such as *How long have you worked at XYZ Company?* Role plays will help learners prepare for these questions. Learners may be unaccustomed to writing dictation sentences and may need repetitive practice. Finally, learners need to be prepared for the history/civics test. A list of 100 practice questions is available from the INS or various agencies which serve

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GOODWIN *Continued from page 32*

general test centers. These test centers are located in high schools, community and junior colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and Intermediate Units. There also are more than 80 test centers in correctional facilities and hospitals to serve adult candidates who are residents of those institutions. The goal of all centers is to provide GED testing opportunities to as many adults in Pennsylvania as is possible. Testing fees vary by center, depending on operating costs. The centers are managed by Chief Examiners who are responsible for ordering test materials, establishing testing dates, conducting test sessions, grading tests, and forwarding the results to the State GED Administrator's office in the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The state office records all scores and is Pennsylvania's only official repository of all GED testing records. Transcripts are available only to the candidate or to anyone to whom he/she provides a release. As of January 1, 1998, a $3.00 fee is being charged for all additional transcripts. Initial transcripts that are provided each time a test is graded and diplomas will continue to be provided at no charge. Duplicate diplomas will not be issued.

With the recent increased emphasis on education, the GED program is expected to grow. Currently, Pennsylvania teaches and tests only a small percentage of its adults who need a high school credential. As the Commonwealth's adult education community grows, the GED testing program will continue to support it with a quality and credible diploma worthy of the extraordinary efforts of the adult educators and candidates.■

MEARNS *Continued from page 33*

teacher; understanding and respecting cultural differences is part of the job.

ESL materials have come a long way in recent years. There are catalogs full of innovative, creative materials that take all learning modalities into account. Audio and video tapes, picture dictionaries, CD-ROM programs, and interactive cut-outs are only a sampling of what is available to programs. Of course, most programs are not able to pick whatever they want, but the State Literacy Resource Centers make materials available to programs. It is up to the teacher/tutor to search out these resources and keep an open mind as they try them out on students.

The six regional Professional Development Centers were established to support practitioners with their professional development. Take advantage of the PDC training programs as they become available in your area. An intensive professional development opportunity takes place each year when practitioners gather for the ESL Institute. There, colleagues can network and discover what works for them. It is also the time to talk to the book vendors and peruse new materials.

The ESL experience can be as exciting as you and your student(s) want it to be. You will find yourself learning as much from your students as they do from you. Where else can you put yourself in the shoes of your Bosnian, Haitian, or Vietnamese students without buying an airline ticket? Along with the fun are pitfalls. It is frustrating to see prejudice between students or to learn of a student whose spouse forbids her to attend class. The temptation is to adopt your students; the reality is that you want them to become independent, productive members of the community. Learning English is an important step.■

SIDES *Continued from page 33*

internationals. This list can provide a good foundation for instruction, but learners who struggle with English will need help putting the isolated facts into a broader context. Many publishers have materials which are excellent for low-literate learners. The ESL program of Catholic Charities has prepared a list of useful published materials. Additionally, a basic-level text (*A Study Guide to Prepare for the New Written Citizenship Examination*) is available from the State Literacy Resource Centers.

Adult educators should not attempt to answer questions regarding immigration law, as the answers to most questions are more complicated than they initially seem. However, educators can assist learners in finding an accredited immigration counselor or an attorney. Agencies offering such services can be found in the blue pages under *immigration* or *legal help*. Clearly defining your role as an educator from the outset will enable you to avoid problems later.■

GRUBER *Continued from page 32*

ploma, and

- deeper insight into the teaching of a standards-driven curriculum.

Elsewhere in Pennsylvania, Northwest Tri-County I.U. #5, Schuylkill I.U. #29, Nazareth School District, and the Metropolitan Career Learning Center of Philadelphia have programs modeled on Cumberland Valley's AchievE. More traditional high school diploma programs exist in York and Lancaster Counties. Numerous member organizations of AAACE operate external and adult degree programs.

However, it must be noted that our high school diploma program complements the GED. It does not negate the need or value of GED preparation.

Any adult basic education provider could expand GED services and initiate a similar high school diploma program. The Cumberland Valley School District is willing to assist in this endeavor.

READ MORE ABOUT IT

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Teaching in a correctional facility

by Eric Epstein

The most effective tool society has in preventing recidivism is academic and vocational education. However, there are myriad of risks, nuances, and challenges inherent in teaching incarcerated adults—some subtle, others overt and obvious. Teachers, tutors, and volunteers in these unique and potentially volatile settings must adopt certain rules of behavior. There are only two certainties in corrections' education: 1) all inmates swear they are innocent and 2) students have an incredible knack for locating the GED teacher and chaplain prior to sentencing.

What constitutes an "adult" in Pennsylvania's correctional system is a fluid concept. Individuals tried as "juveniles" and sentenced to "state time"* are incarcerated in facilities administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. These facilities are dominated by male inmates and are primarily located in rural settings divided among Youth Development Centers, Youth Forestry Camps, Secure Treatment Units, and "Boot Camps." (Many Pennsylvania counties now operate separate juvenile detention centers as well.)

However, juveniles tried and convicted as adults are placed in an adult correctional facility and are likely to find their way into the classroom. These students present special problems. Due to their age and relative physical and emotional maturity, these "adults" are usually more volatile and vulnerable and are less likely to be motivated. Remember, juveniles who commit "adult" crimes are just as violent and sexually active as older inmates, and rarely display remorse for their actions. Adult educators need to be aware of these students and should take special care when attempting to match them with a tutor or mentor. For example, a more mature inmate may be best suited to serve as a mentor/tutor and more likely to be respected by a juvenile.

TEACHER TO STUDENT

Obviously, the relationship between a teacher and student of opposite sexes requires vigilance, structure, and acute observation. Hugging, winking, sexual references, or other extrapersonal relationships, such as contacting an inmate's family or depositing money in his canteen is inappropriate. Most juvenile "adults" come from dysfunctional homes and may be actively seeking a surrogate parent or girlfriend.

Most adult inmates have been incarcerated in the juvenile setting before they "graduate" to the more intense and violent adult correctional arena. County prisons, dedicated to inmates who receive sentences of 24 months or less, vary considerably in their demographic composition and their commitment to educational and social services. Some county prisons contain explosive inmate divisions that emanate from territorial disputes, familial incarceration, racial and ethnic intolerance, and an inherited status associated with an inmate's crime. For example, an inmate convicted of sexually abusing a child is accorded no respect and is usually targeted for retribution. An inmate convicted of a hate crime is going to create a classroom distraction if the majority of your students are racial and religious minorities. Additionally, hostility between treatment and law-enforcement staffs can increase prison tensions and is usually a result of poor communication between the two staffs.

Teachers, tutors, and volunteers in these unique and potentially volatile settings must adopt certain rules of behavior.

THE SCI SYSTEM

The State Correctional Institutions (SCI) are operated by the Department of Corrections and designated as minimum, medium, or maximum security. Several facilities also classify and relocate inmates. With the exception of SCI Muncy, Pennsylvania state correctional facilities contain male inmates. Additionally, most SCIs reserve a portion of their campus for emotionally disturbed inmates who may be eligible to attend class.

Most of the rules and guidelines that apply to county facilities remain true at state prisons. All actions, movements, and nonverbal communications are important. Gossip, threats, sexual innuendoes, "grit" (eye contact), vicarious drug and alcohol highs, masturbation, notes, messages, theft, and any form of gambling constitute real and impending violence and confrontation. If something looks suspicious, report the behavior to your supervisor or a correctional officer. Failure to report inappropriate behavior may actually encourage an inmate to escalate the stakes or assume you were receptive to his comments. Remember, incarcerated adults have a lot of time to fantasize and conceive elaborate and convincing manipulative schemes.

DIFFERENCES AMONG STUDENTS

Learn the subtle differences and marks of various inmate groups. For example, some Cuban inmates deported during the Carter Administration have their offenses tattooed on their hand and knuckles. Additionally, Latino inmates are not a monolithic group, and people from different Spanish-speaking areas may be rivals. Clearly, race, ethnicity, religion, geography, criminal offense, age, hygiene, and sexual preference all have an impact on your classroom.

The most predictable thing about corrections education is its unpredictability. Teaching within the confines of a prison can be a rewarding experience. You are providing adults with a second chance, the majority of your students are motivated, attendance and punctuality are predetermined, and school is one of the few bright spots in their lives.■

* "State time" in an adult facility is normally a prison sentence of at least two years. Please note that "juveniles" who receive "state time" can actually serve an indeterminate sentence or be placed in a juvenile institution for less than two years.

Family literacy is for parents and children

by Joe Norden, Jr. and Sharon Brentley

Emerging from the endeavors of the State of Kentucky and the Kenan Trust of the late 1980s, the field of family literacy is relatively new to the educational realm, and as such, knowledge regarding family literacy's various conditions, characteristics, and outcomes is only beginning to come forth.

Family literacy programs tend to deal with the family as a unit, rather than singling out children or adults exclusively, as most educational efforts do. The field's core philosophy declares parents to be children's first and most important teachers (Hibpshman, 1989) and considers the familial setting to be a particularly effective educational environment (Auerbach, 1989). Family literacy seeks to do many things: break the intergenerational cycle of low literacy and academic skills, support moms and dads during the challenges of parenthood, advance young children's learning and growth, get adult students ready for the world of work, and saturate program participants with lifelong learning values.

Family literacy efforts are apt to reflect these many objectives, with programs encompassing a wide scope of literacy activities that involve parents and children (Ponzetti & Bodine, 1993). Though not necessarily representative of family literacy in its entirety, programs deriving from the Kenan Model of family literacy represent the majority of work currently being done in the field, consisting of four basic components: 1) adult education; 2) parent education; 3) early childhood education; and 4) parent-and-child learning activities, often called PACT Time (Parent And Child Together). Many programs add supplementary elements to this mix. For example, the federal Even Start Family Literacy Program mandates home visits as an additional piece.

The following is a summary of the four fundamental program areas of family literacy. These "core elements" constitute a foundation upon which other components are often fastened during the daily business of family literacy programs.

ADULT EDUCATION

In family literacy, adult academic efforts can include work on basic reading skills, GED preparation, English as a Second Language studies (ESL), and/or brushing up on skills in preparation for a college or trade school. With recent changes in welfare legislation, employment preparedness is rapidly becoming a larger part of family literacy's adult education piece. Technology, along with the workplace, is beginning to spur more instruction in computer-related skills within family-based programs. Typically, adult education classes are scheduled parallel to early childhood sessions.

PARENT EDUCATION

Parent education is approached in numerous ways throughout family literacy programs, with parent groups regularly constituting themselves as discussion groups, support groups, traditional academic classes, or, most often, some combination of these. Usually, parents identify their current (or anticipated) needs as the caregivers of young children and proceed to use literacy-related activities to obtain information relating to those specific parenting needs. That information might then be used to access support services, help solve a particular problem, or enlighten others on the subject. The parent education component lends itself to educational offerings from various specialists in fields related to families' concerns.

Early childhood education

In its quest to break the cycle of low literacy skills that often accompanies disadvantaged households, family literacy aspires to offer children every opportunity to grow, not just intellectually, but also socially and emotionally, within the dual frameworks of a peer group and parent-child interactions. Developmentally appropriate activities—activities geared to a particular stage in a child's mental and physical growth—are intended to stimulate young children's development and are an integral part of family literacy's "childhood division." Currently, the usual ages of children served in family literacy programs range from birth to about age seven, although exceptions are occasionally made to accommodate older children.

PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITIES

Of the four basic elements of family literacy, Parent And Child Together—better known as PACT Time—may well be the defining feature of the field. No other component ties the elements of family literacy together in the way that PACT Time does. From family literacy's principal tenet of Parent-As-First-Teacher comes the parent—child interaction which is at the center of PACT Time. PACT Time activities ideally take place one-on-one, within the context of child-directed play. (Note: However oft-used this model may be, neither one-on-one sessions nor child-directed play is immutable; one does see variations on these standard PACT Time approaches within programs.) While engaged in children's play, parents fulfill their role as first teacher and have some fun teaching—and learning—during quality time with their kids.

NATIONAL CENTER

The National Center For Family Literacy (NCFL), headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, disseminates information about family literacy and supports the implementation of family literacy programs nationwide. The organization does so by educating policy makers as well as practitioners in the various facets of family literacy. In less than a decade, NCFL has trained hundreds of program staff nationwide. In 1991, building upon previous experience with the Kenan Trust, NCFL teamed up with Toyota Motor Corporation to create Families For Learning, now a nationwide program with sites in more than 15 cities. Each spring, NCFL puts together a National Conference on Family Literacy in Louisville, which is the largest and arguably the most important conference in the field.

EVEN START

The nation's largest and most ambi-

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Adult basic skills and workplace education

by Michelle Joyce

Many studies are telling us that employees lack the basic skills necessary to do their jobs effectively. The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) administered in 1993 was a comprehensive nationwide survey of the literacy skills of American adults. This survey showed that 90 million Americans—roughly half of all able-bodied adults—are lacking basic skills. This study found that 14-16% of our nation's labor force have very low "prose," "document," and "quantitative," skills and an additional 24 to 28% have skills that are only marginally better.

According to a survey by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), 60% of all manufacturers say their current workers are lacking basic math skills. One-third of all job applicants they reject get turned down because of poor reading or writing skills, and nearly one-quarter are rejected for poor math or communication skills. No employer can afford to assume there is not a basic-skills problem. By some estimates, 20% of current workers have low skills; by others, the number is 40%.

A 1995 National Employer Survey conducted by the National Center on the Educational Quality of the Workforce found that, on the average, employers considered only 80% of their workers to be proficient at their jobs. Thirty-two percent of employers thought that 75% or less of their employees were proficient at their jobs. Only 19% of employers thought that their percentage of proficient employees was greater than 95%. Over half of the small to mid-sized companies surveyed for the Southport Institute Policy Analysis Study on this topic indicated that they had skill problems that would merit basic skills training programs.

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM?

Many companies recognize their training needs but do not have the time, staff, or expertise to address the basic-skill areas. Those that see basic-skills training as a priority often seek the help of an outside provider. Professional for-profit training firms, publicly funded adult education centers, nonprofit community-based organizations, and volunteer tutoring programs are involved in workplace education. Workplace education is generally defined as education and training provided at or near the work site to provide workers with the basic or advanced skills needed to function effectively in their jobs.

Can adult basic education programs help companies with this training?

Adult basic education programs can provide companies with basic-skills programs, but for these classes to be successful the ABE provider must make it clear to the employer *what services they can provide, how they will provide these services, and how their programs will be evaluated.* Different workplace providers provide different types of programs and services. For example, a volunteer-based program might not be able to provide the range of services that a community college can, but it can provide a tutor for an employee who needs individual tutoring in a particular subject at little or no cost to the employer. Programs that know their mission and their unique capabilities can market their services to employers successfully. Success in the field depends on knowing what you do well and delivering a quality service.

Some companies want workplace basic-skills training that is highly specialized. This type of class might require that a task analysis be done at the work site. A task analysis involves an observer doing a written and detailed observation of a person(s) performing a job task at a work site and then analyzing that task for its basic-skill components. Doing a task analysis may require a lot of a provider's time, research, and expertise. Providers should refer employers to other more appropriate workplace programs when necessary.

WHAT DETERMINES SUCCESS?

In addition to having a good match between the provider's capabilities and a company request for services, a quality workplace program requires the collaboration and partnership of a provider and the company. A training team consisting of instructors, administrators, union representatives, supervisors, managers, and employees is essential to the ongoing success of a workplace program. The team, under the leadership of the education provider, makes decisions regarding the objectives, curriculum, standards, and assessments for the program. Adult basic education providers are responsible for designing and creating an educational program that addresses the concerns of the employer while respecting the privacy and concerns of the employees.

WHAT IS EFFECTIVE?

Businesses are interested in the bottom line. Workplace programs should be teaching job skills to employees. The most effective workplace programs are those where:

- training objectives are linked to company objectives,
- basic skills are taught within the context of workplace demands and activities,

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tious venture in family literacy is the federally created and funded, state-administered Even Start program (Nickse, 1993), created in 1988 as an amendment to the Stafford-Hawkins Act of 1967. In less than a decade, Even Start has actualized over 600 sites across the United States, from Alabama to Alaska to Puerto Rico. The Even Start legislation aims to serve those families most in need and attempts to do so in a surprisingly wide variety of settings, from the inner cities to the fields of the migrant worker. Pennsylvania's Even Start is part of the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education as of July 1, 1998.

Family literacy represents a fresh approach to educational efforts. Seeking to break the intergenerational cycle of low literacy skills, family literacy is only beginning to unfold and evolve toward its future. Its promise lies in familial ties, the special bonds that can nurture both parent and child together in the course of becoming lifelong learners.■

JOYCE *Continued from page 37*

- evidence that skills transfer from the classroom to the workplace,
- training is tailored to the employees' needs and involves employee participation in its design, and
- skilled and trained workplace instructors teach the classes.

To prove a program's effectiveness, it is important that a provider have assessments which show how the program has benefited the company. In addition to appropriate tests, the training team can be instrumental in helping the provider create and implement other types of assessment. The company can assist in evaluation by implementing its own organizational or company measures. This might include measurements of increased productivity, improved quality of product or scrap, or increased safety. Multiple measurements ensure that the classes will be seen as valuable and worthwhile to all team members.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

The 1992 Southport Institute Policy Analysis Study found that programs in basic workplace skills improve both employees' attitudes and behaviors and a firm's bottom line. The small and mid-sized companies surveyed reported improvements in workers' motivation, self-esteem, willingness to take responsibility, teamwork, and communication and problem-solving abilities. The study also found that firms that invest in workplace programs benefit more from new technology and reorganization than do firms that do not include a basic education component in their programs.

Companies and human-resource personnel need help with basic skills training, and they need the advice and expertise that only adult basic education programs can provide.

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The dual role of teacher as counselor

by Jacqueline Kitson Jackson

For many years I kept my counselor's role hidden in my teacher's closet. I am grateful to have been able to strike a delicate balance that values the dual role.

As a counselor, my role in the intake and evaluation process is to look for indications which will help create a proper fit between a student and a program. For example, in what kinds of literacy programs has a student been involved in the past? If the student expects one-on-one tutoring, computer-assisted instruction, or classroom instruction that is solely focused on GED preparation, the counselor can help clarify the ways a program may or may not be able to meet those needs.

A counselor can encourage students to see their peers as important community resources. Networking can become a key life strategy because it disrupts the idea that a student is isolated in a life situation. Usually, in any given class, many people are engaged in similar struggles. Ending notions of isolation helps students envision alternative possibilities. Students seem encouraged by the success of creative solutions devised by their peers. Secondly, having an opportunity to talk through potential problems and to plan in advance gives students confidence and competence that can minimize future crises. I do not see the role of counselor as a miracle-worker. I believe, at best, that a counselor is one of many resources that permits students to creatively work through life issues in a supportive atmosphere.

Part of my intake interview includes asking questions about past school history. Does the student have a learning difference? If the student acknowledges a previous diagnosis, a course of instructional action in line with those recommendations helps all staff to focus on ways to help the student reach self-defined goals for program participation. If the student is undiagnosed, I may suggest getting an evaluation. For some students this process ends years of uncertainty by putting a name to their learning difficulties. It also opens the door for specialized testing accommodations for potential GED test candidates. For some students, however, this process may feel like another label that marks them as different. Again, my role is to raise possibilities while respecting the student's right to choose.

Historically, I have worked in communities underserved by medical delivery systems providing preventive health interventions. Preparing a student to attend class often means making some general inquiries about health issues. Does the student need a vision or hearing evaluation to maximize program participation? Does the student or someone for whom the student provides care suffer from a recurrent illness? If so, how does he/she plan to manage the illness and attend class? Is the student receiving medical treatment which may affect classroom performance, memory, or concentration? None of these questions is asked to exclude students. However, such information helps staff understand patterns of absences due to doctor's visits or debilitating conditions. Students diagnosed with cancer, lupus, and HIV, as well as those caring for physically challenged children or spouses, often describe school as the one activity about which they feel positive. Disclosure helps all staff become sensitized to students' desires to create a positive space for themselves by engaging in a self-selected activity in spite of health issues. It also encourages team development of appropriate instructional strategies and goals.

Networking can become a key life strategy because it disrupts the idea that a student is isolated in a life situation.

COUNSELING ON PERSONAL ISSUES

I have found that my strongest as-

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sets are listening, a commitment to confidentiality, and a commitment to a nonjudgmental counseling stance. Many students have experienced supportive relationships that break off at inopportune times. Developing supportive relationships that offer constancy is a strength in learning communities, which serve as beacons of hope in many economically impoverished communities. This is not meant to imply that the supportive relationship should foster dependency. In every phase of counseling I strive to model proactive behavior and assist students in the development of skills which will help them move on to solving problems on their own. Helping students strengthen their abilities to advocate on their own behalf gives them a lifelong skill.

Finally, wading through the pool of community agencies serving the area around a program, as well as citywide or countywide resources, is critical to the success of a counseling program. My best resources are students who provide feedback on agencies. This helps me to better determine an agency's strengths and weaknesses. In considering an agency for referral purposes I make every effort to ask the student in advance what type of help they prefer. Some of the men I have worked with, for example, prefer individual rather than group counseling. Many students need counseling in their native language or prefer counseling consistent with their religious beliefs. I have found community newspapers invaluable resources for pursuing leads on culturally relevant programs.

Many students who come to literacy programs have agency affiliations. Exploring the nature of these affiliations eliminates duplication of efforts and overwhelming students with dual streams of appointments. To coordinate services I seek the student's permission to work with the other agency to clarify, confirm, or suggest as the situation dictates. Making personal contact has been a successful strategy for building a positive image of the agencies I have represented. Benefits yielded from this approach have been an increased recognition of literacy agencies as constructive programs, improved communication between agencies, and new referrals.■

'The retention problem'

by Tana Reiff and Alisa Belzer

The numbers may vary from one adult education agency to another, but the issue sounds the same: too many of our adult students leave our programs too soon. It is commonly known as "the retention problem." Most adults arrive at our doors voluntarily and highly motivated, and then, for one reason or another, stop coming. Their departures leave us with many questions: Have they found the academic work overwhelming? Are they discouraged? Have they lost their transportation or child care? Has a health problem arisen? Is the class schedule inconvenient? Is there something wrong with my teaching? Has the goal of reading better or getting a GED become less important than it first seemed?

Adult educators and researchers everywhere are tackling "the retention problem." Indeed, much of the current work in this area was compiled into a neat package as Volume 2, Issue A of *Focus on Basics*, the research-and-practice newsletter of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) in Boston. If you haven't already read that "Learner Motivation" issue and you're concerned about retention (and who isn't?), you can get it on the Web or by contacting NCSALL.

The title and content of this themed issue of *Focus on Basics* imply that there is a strong link between motivation and retention. However, most of the articles go beyond the assumption that motivation is solely a product of either the teachers' or learners' efforts. For example, while interesting and relevant curriculum is clearly an important ingredient in retaining students, the variety of findings reported point to the complexity of circumstances that contribute to retention. Educators need to consider learners' individual needs and experiences, their social contexts, including supports and barriers to participation, and the ways in which their own practice as well as broader program structures do and do not support learning.

In spite of our best efforts, students do leave. Sometimes an explanation for their departures are easily found in the complications of their lives. Yet, we can all name plenty of students who persisted in their learning venture *despite* everything else going on in their lives. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners provide an interesting model of this because, of all the program areas within adult basic education, they have the best record of persistence. Notes Moira Lucey in her article "Where attendance is not a problem":

> ESOL students have not necessarily had failure experiences prior to enrolling in a program. They may be well educated and speak more than one language. They enter programs with excitement. That, in turn, contributes to their ability to learn English. For most, studying ESOL carries no stigma: it is not looked at as remedial education. Even if ESOL students have little or no formal education in their native countries, we often see a high level of motivation to learn English and basic English literacy (p. 19).

Certainly, the factors affecting ESOL learners' high retention rates are often quite different from those of native English speakers, who often *have* experienced failure in school, who may *not* be as well educated to begin with, and for whom going to school *does* carry a stigma. To compensate for these differences, adult learners who are native speakers may need different kinds of motivators.

For example, many programs are finding that when their adult students feel a part of the program community, they stay longer. This has many implications. Above all, instructional content must be relevant. This is an oft repeated maxim that seems obvious, but a close look at the materials we use and the topics we cover can reveal a striking gap between content and learner. One remedy is to involve students in setting their own learning goals and paths toward attaining those goals. Opening that investment opportunity can pay big dividends.

Another way to build community is through small-group learning. Programs that have shifted from completely individualized instruction to classes and group discussion are seeing improve-

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ments in retention (see for example, Quigley's article, "The first three weeks: A critical time for motivation"). Curriculum direction can be set within the group, which not only boosts interest but provides excellent experiences in decision making. Learners tend to be more reluctant to miss class if they feel needed and if they feel they may be letting down the other members of the group. Greg Hart, in his article "Power, literacy and motivation," on student activism at Pima County Adult Education, and Barbara Garner in her description of student involvement in program planning at the Goodwill Learning Center illustrate the importance of learners' taking control over small and large decisions within a program and the wider community.

Locally generated knowledge regarding motivation and retention comes out of EQUAL, Pennsylvania's program improvement initiative. Program research has shown that adult students appreciate frequent feedback about their work. Those students whose teachers are regularly providing and explaining assessment information tend to stay in programs longer.

On the one hand, educators need to consider and enact strategies that improve retention. On the other hand, we need to realistically accept the fact that no matter how hard we work to understand our learners' needs and connect learning to their lives, our students' personal circumstances are beyond our control, and people's families and lives outside of programs are usually a higher priority. Practitioners can only do so much to retain students.

With all this said, however, don't assume that a student who has dropped out is gone forever. Alisa Belzer reports on her 1991 Section 353-funded research study on retention in "Stopping out, not dropping out" that adults may not consider themselves "dropouts" just because they have stopped coming to class. While programs may label them as such, the adults whose participation she followed over several months still considered themselves to be in the program and planned to return even though they were no longer attending. To keep the door open for their return, it is worth keeping in touch with students who are registered but not coming. They just might be back, especially if they have some encouragement. Program planners and teachers should plan curriculum and program procedures around the reality that learners often come in and out of programs over time. Belzer suggests the following implications:

> Teachers and tutors could make sure that students have materials they can work on outside of class or tutoring; they should also ensure that learners know how to use those materials. Program staff could emphasize lifelong learning skills such as encouraging the habit of reading and writing every day, so that students continue practicing their literacy skills when they are unable to attend. . . . On a broader scale, teachers and program managers should plan their program structures, curricula, and assessment procedures on the assumption that even under the best of circumstances, students will come and go and, hopefully, come again (p. 17).

Finally, we need to keep in mind that programs serving voluntary adult students are always going to have to keep an eye on retention, but it is not necessarily a "problem." Keeping students motivated is at the core of all good teaching and learning.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Focus on Basics, March 1998 (*Vol. 2, Iss. A*). Boston, MA: World Education. Available at hugse1.harvard.edu/~nesall.■

RECOGNIZING LEARNERS' SUCCESS

by John Mihota

On a lark, I recently brought some of my child's reward stickers that he received from his teacher for success in school into my adult education classroom. I passed them out to students when they did well on assignments. Almost without exception, their reactions were ones of joy and pride. They competed for and were motivated by those small rewards.

A fact of human nature is that people want to be recognized for their efforts and accomplishments. Too often we educators forget that simple truth and let our classrooms sink into tedious pits of drudgery where perhaps the only goal is the future attainment of a GED. The daily motivation for our students that is essential to their ultimate success is often overlooked. With that in mind I went about structuring a rewards system that would recognize student progress and effort.

The first principle is to have multiple criteria for what constitutes success. The best academics might not be the hardest workers and vice versa. The system should provide all learners who are willing to work with the opportunity to obtain some type of success. For example, rewards can be given based on attendance. Anyone who attends class more than a certain number of hours per month can be honored. Students' personal achievements, relevant to their own goals or capabilities, can also be measured and appreciated. If a student's TABE scores have increased two grade levels within a specified time, then that is sufficient cause to give notice. Valedictorians should be chosen not just for highest scores but for effort as indicated by their attendance hours. ABE students should also be recognized at graduation time. Attendance, relative and absolute academic improvements, and positive attitude are all acceptable measures of success that should be utilized when students are nominated for statewide Success Stories, students of the month or week, newspaper releases, cable bulletins, or any other recognition instruments.

The second major principle is timeliness. Rewards given annually are not frequent enough to encourage desired behavior. Give recognition daily, even if it is just in the form of verbal praise. Develop student-of-the-week awards based on the above criteria. Earning these awards would then qualify a student for monthly honors. These winners could then be recognized by the local media. Businesses could be solicited for more tangible awards. For example, the neighborhood Domino's or Pizza Hut might be swayed to donate pizza to the monthly winners.

No matter what rewards your agency plans to use, the criteria has to be diverse enough so that all students have a chance for success and that recognition should be frequent enough to properly motivate.■

Growing as a practitioner in adult basic and literacy education

Professional development is directly tied to program improvement

by Helen Hall

Pennsylvania's adult basic and literacy education programs are on the leading edge of providing high-quality professional development opportunities for educators, with the goal of improving teaching and learning, resulting in improved practices and high levels of success for learners. These professional development programs, based on supporting adult theory and proven best practices, focus on giving adult practitioners multiple opportunities for professional development. The Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) has placed emphasis on practitioners' commitment to continuous program improvement.

Pennsylvania is confronted with the challenge of creating professional development opportunities for part-time staff and volunteer tutors, who make up the vast majority of the adult education community. Administrators, teachers, and volunteer tutors are examining ways to build professional development into the life of ABLE agencies through flexible scheduling and extended blocks of time when learners are not there. Research shows that the greatest gains in teacher learning are in programs that study student results and agree on what they need to learn collectively and do differently to improve results. To build learning into adult education programs in productive ways, adult educators, locally and at the state level, continue to explore ways to make the professional development pieces "fit" to ensure quality improvement of services.

The Bureau of ABLE promotes ongoing professional development opportunities that meet practitioners' unique needs. This is evident in the careful and thoughtful manner in which the Bureau restructured the professional development system by bringing together a workgroup comprised of seasoned practitioners to draft the Guiding Principles for Professional Development and mission statement. Professional development activities around the state reflect the principles of high-quality professional development. The mission provides professional development opportunities to adult education practitioners that result in adult learners' enhancing their basic skills and competencies, while highlighting the importance of improving teaching and learning as the primary means of meeting the mission.

REGIONAL OFFERINGS

Regionally, the Professional Development Centers (PDC's) are responsible for delivering professional development opportunities that prepare ABLE practitioners to perform productively and give them ongoing support and technical assistance to meet their program and individual goals. PDC's also provide opportunities for practitioners to network regionally. With a shift away from the "one-shot" workshop, the PDC's carry out a well-planned program of professional development in which practitioners are actively engaged in focus and sharing groups, training series, state-initiated institutes, site-specific training, and practitioner research. These approaches provide follow-up and technical assistance through one-on-one consultations and online activities. The PDC's also support and carry out statewide initiatives in their regions to enhance the quality of local ABLE programs.

IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

To strengthen local programs, adult educators are thinking and conducting educational activities differently, especially in the context of program improvement. Project EQUAL (Educational Quality for Adult Literacy) is the Bureau of ABLE's program improvement initiative. While the goal of EQUAL is continuous improvement of adult education services in the state, it is also part of the national context for improving accountability and educational services. In keeping with EQUAL's overall goal, programs have identified local Program Improvement Teams made up of administrators, teachers, and volunteer tutors who have the responsibility of assessing programs, collecting and analyzing data in order to make informed decisions related to program improvement. At the EQUAL sites, teams receive training on team building, conducting the Program Self-Assessment, and collecting and analyzing data for decision making. Ultimately, all ABLE programs will be actively engaged in the process for continuous improvement.

SUPPORTING IMPROVEMENT

An understanding of the relationship between practitioner research and program improvement processes can contribute to increased interest in the state Learning from Practice (LFP) initiative. LFP integrates the two approaches, action research and practitioner inquiry. Educators work collaboratively or individually, over time, to generate new knowledge for themselves and for the field. The educators also work from self-generated questions which grow out of day-to-day work concerns to develop systematic plans for collecting and analyzing data and making sense of the data to inform practice. The Learning from Practice professional development op-

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UNDERGRADUATE PREPARATION OF AN ADULT EDUCATOR

by G. Michael Vavrek

A popular "how-to" book, Steven Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, has remained a best-seller for years despite the fact that the habits "ain't easy." Similarly, being an effective adult educator is not easy. The caveat for preparing to be an "effective person" and an "effective adult educator" is this: It is hard work. Let us bring the two notions together by applying the seven habits to preparing to be an adult educator.

1. Base actions on your values, not on moods, feelings, and circumstances. Many experiences challenge the values of an undergraduate with values clarification being the desired result. Clear values will enable the prospective adult educator to decide if the career goal is in "sync" with those values. A key is seeking a variety of experiences inside and outside the classroom that challenge the values that underlie one's interest in being an adult educator.

2. Begin with the end in mind—Write a personal mission statement. While an undergraduate's career goal may be to be an adult educator, probably few have written it as part of a personal mission statement encompassing the physical, social/emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of life. The Covey process offers a way to create such a statement. But there are other ways, such as by taking social-science courses and using career-counseling services. The key is that from time to time during the undergraduate years a student should go through a provocative process that challenges his/her values, including the career goal. (Keep in mind that, while Pennsylvania neither has nor requires certification for adult basic education teachers, most agencies prefer hiring teachers who are certified in some area of education.)

3. Put first things first—Say no to the unimportant, no matter how urgent, and yes to the important. The many options confronting an undergraduate require decisions about how to invest time. Part of seeking experiences that challenge a career goal is judging which experiences are important. Be open to a variety of experiences that help clarify values and goals.

4. Think win-win—Seek mutually beneficial relationships. Adult educators are in the "people business." Therefore, an undergraduate should emphasize interacting with a variety of people in an array of task-oriented situations. A key is along with classroom experiences, the undergraduate will benefit by participating in off-campus volunteer work that is people-centered. For example, involvement in the Pennsylvania Literacy Corps as an undergraduate relates directly to a future career in adult literacy education.

5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood. This principle perhaps is the most important because a key to being an effective adult educator is understanding the student. For the adult student, education is commonly a high priority; however, it is often not the *highest* priority. Family and work often compete with education. But often the reason adults are in formal education

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portunity emphasizes the development of a professional community and leadership skills for future research groups. A teacher in the Central-Northeast region of the state said that "participation in LFP helped her to think reflectively about her students, methods, and program."

Another initiative is the Training Development Project. This initiative gives practitioners tools for quality teaching and learning in core content areas that is consistent across the state. The training modules are based on sound adult learning theory and require active participation from participants. Trained practitioners are implementing the modules throughout the state. The Southwest PDC noted that "all the trainers in the Southwest were impressed with the 'train the trainers' sessions." Through this initiative, adult educators participate in well-planned training *in Math as Problem Solving, Teaching Strategies for Multi-Level ESL Classes, Cooperative Learning, Case Management*, and *Assessment for Adult Learners*. Additional modules are being developed based on program needs, individual needs, and areas for improvement.

The statewide Professional Development Project on Adults with Learning Differences equips administrators, teachers, volunteer tutors, and other program staff with instructional approaches for teaching learners with learning differences and continuing in-depth training that offers opportunities for follow-up and telephone consultation. Practitioners also receive regional and program-based training, and the project manager offers language development materials, study and organizational aids, and videotapes. Practitioners also receive newsletters and e-mail to keep them updated on good practices.

ABLE Net, the statewide technology initiative, provides training, guidance, and support to Master Trainers in all of the technology-related training that occurs through the PDCs. This service enables teachers, administrators, support staff, and volunteer tutors to develop and maintain high-level skills in using technology in their learning environments and administrative offices.

There is a steady rise in adult educators participating in professional development programs. From research-oriented activities to professional development initiatives, practitioners are participating in a wide range of activities offered through the regional centers and at the local program sites. This enables local programs to link professional development to program improvement findings and plan accordingly. This practice is consistent with the National Staff Development Council recommendation that staff development (professional development) be integrated into system-wide continuous program improvement planning. The Council views this move as essential to the success of these efforts. The Bureau will continue to provide adult educators with the training and development that leads to preparing adult learners with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed as workers, citizens, and parents as they move into the 21st century.■

Graduate programs in adult education

by Trenton R. Ferro

So you woke up one morning and discovered that you were an educator of adults! Until now you may have been an elementary or secondary school teacher, a nurse, a salesperson, a personnel officer, a social worker, a homemaker, a community organizer, a trainer, a corrections officer—the list goes on. You're not alone! Rarely do people go through childhood saying, "I want to be an adult educator when I grow up." We arrive at the realization that we are, or want to be, adult educators through a series of life tasks and experiences.

Your self-discovery, no doubt, has also prompted additional questions: What is an "adult educator"? What do they do? What do we mean by "adult education"? How can I prepare myself for these new tasks for which I have received little or no previous preparation or training? Many avenues are open to you which will allow you to grow and develop as an educator of adults, several of which are discussed in this *Handbook*. Earning an advanced degree in adult education is the capstone of these various learning efforts and opportunities.

However, is the pursuit of such a degree for you? Reflect upon, and respond to, the following questions:

- Do I already possess at least a bachelor's degree in some subject/content or professional area?
- Am I planning to work, or am I already working, with adults as an educator, trainer, or service provider in such locales as a school or college; extension service; healthcare institution; business or industry; social service, community, religious, or other organization; prison; or the military?
- Do I intend to continue working with adults as a career?
- Am I interested both in improving my skills as a practitioner and in developing a greater understanding of the theory and research base undergirding professional practice in adult education?

If your responses to these questions are positive, you should consider seeking an advanced degree in adult education. This endeavor will allow you to bring together into a new and meaningful context your previous area(s) of content specialization, your life experiences, and your new role as an educator of adults. Earning a graduate degree will enhance your sense of self-worth, provide extensive professional development, help you better understand the unique characteristics and requirements of adults as learners, and prepare you to handle the various responsibilities related to working with adults.

Once you've decided that earning an advanced degree might be for you, you will need to consider several other factors:

- If you are unable to move (as is the case with a majority of adult students), which programs can you access? Consult the list below. Most adults in Pennsylvania live within a one- to two-hour drive of a program site.
- What special areas of expertise do you want to develop? Are you interested more in theory, in practice, or in a combination of the two? Requesting information from several graduate programs will reveal the emphases of each.
- Might you be interested in pursuing a doctorate following the completion of a master's degree? Attending one school for work at the master's level and another for the doctorate provides a broader background of understanding and an increased depth of preparation.

There are certainly other concerns, but this initial checklist highlights the value of investigating the opportunities available within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The list below provides the basic information you need to make contact with the program(s). Individual programs can then provide you with specific descriptions, requirements, and application criteria. Each entry lists the name of the sponsoring institution; the degree(s) available and program sites (if the program is offered at more than one location); and the name, address, phone numbers(s), and e-mail address of the contact person/coordinator.

Cheyney University of Pennsylvania
M.S. in Adult and Continuing Education
Contact: Dr. Velma Mitchell, 865 Oak Lane, Glenolden, PA 19036; (610) 399-2387; vmitchel@biddle.cheyney.edu

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
M.A. in Adult and Community Education (Indiana, Monroeville) and M.A. in Adult Education and Communications Technology (Indiana)
Contact: Dr. Trenton R. Ferro (ACE) or Dr. Gary J. Dean (AECT), Adult & Community Education, 206 Stouffer Hall, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 1175 Maple, Indiana, PA 15705-1087; (724) 357-2470, (724) 357-7821 (fax); trferro@grove.iup.edu, gjdean@grove.iup.edu; www.iup.edu/ac/

The Pennsylvania State University
M.Ed. (McKeesport) and D.Ed. (Harrisburg) in Adult Education
Contact: Dr. Eunice (Nickie) Askov, 411D Keller Bldg., The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802; (814) 865-0625, (814) 865-2632 (fax); ena1@psu.edu; www.ed.psu.edu/adulted

Temple University
M.Ed. in Adult and Organizational Development (Philadelphia, Harrisburg)
Contact: Dr. Mel Silberman, Temple University, Broad and Montgomery Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19122; (215) 204-8078; silberman@astro.ocis.temple.edu; or Dr. Cheryl Boyer, Temple University Harrisburg, 232 Walnut St., Harrisburg, PA 17101; (717) 232-6400; boyerc@mail.is.temple.edu; www.temple.edu/education/pse/aod.html

University of Pennsylvania
M.Ed. in Reading/Writing/Literacy (with a specialization in adult literacy)
Contact: Dr. Susan Lytle, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education 3700 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 898-8398 or 898-8434; lytle@literacy.upenn.edu

Widener University
M.Ed. (major in Adult Education) and Doctor of Education (concentration in Leadership in Higher Education, focus on Adult Education)
Contact: Dr. Patricia A. Lawler, Widener University, Center for Education, One University Place, Chester, PA 19013; (610) 4990-4252, (610) 499-4623 (fax); Patricia.A.Lawler@widener.edu; www.widener.edu/grad_programs.html■

PDCs offer professional development options

by Diane Inverso

In July 1992, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, established a network of regional Professional Development Centers (PDCs). Supported by federal Section 353 funding and coordinated by the Bureau of Adult Basic Literacy and Education, Pennsylvania's Professional Development Centers provide training and professional advancement for thousands of adult basic education and literacy practitioners throughout the Commonwealth.

A UNION OF CONCERNS

Located in six geographically distinct regions of Pennsylvania, the PDCs are more than a means for disseminating information from the Department of Education or a way for local literacy providers to address questions and concerns peculiar to their region. The Pennsylvania Professional Development Centers represent a careful melding of statewide concerns and initiatives and local issues and strengths. They support the program improvement initiatives promoted by the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education while giving a voice to individual agencies and individual educators in their respective regions.

With the support of the PDCs, practitioners now have a greater variety of options for enhancing their development. With a central network for dissemination of good practices, however, ideas from institutions, agencies, and adult educators all over the state are put to good use by helping practitioners help adults reach their potential.

Likewise, concepts developed in corporate and workplace training, published in journals and magazines on adult education and training, demonstrated by other social service providers, and even used in elementary and secondary education are available for consideration by a statewide network in a fraction of the time it would take without it.

A PROCESS OF INCLUSION

Each PDC assesses its region's needs by consulting with local literacy educators and administrators to determine topics of interest, possible content of sessions or activities, suggestions for presenters, and variations of delivery styles that work. From that assessment, PDC staff and local practitioner advisors develop a roster of activities designed to meet the needs of the greatest number of their constituents. For each PDC, an advisory council comprised of teachers, administrators, and coordinators helps plan, review, and evaluate the activities of the region.

PDC activities are divided into two main categories: research and training. Research activities are designed to examine the practices and larger issues in adult education, particularly those involving adult education in that region. Training activities aim to enhance the skills and knowledge of individual or small groups of practitioners so that they can use new-found information to the direct benefit of adult learners or of the programs in which they serve.

The PDCs offer numerous opportunities for professional development to practitioners and are always looking for ways to offer professional development that will motivate practitioners to be involved. Effective professional development focuses on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of teachers, administrators, and other agency staff so all students can learn and perform at high levels. Literacy practitioners need to continually update their knowledge and skills throughout their careers, just like doctors, lawyers, accountants, and other professionals. New professional knowledge requires sustained learning opportunities for teachers.

Workshops and courses are important for practitioners to learn the best ways to successfully teach all students. But staff development should not stop there. The PDCs also offer technical assistance, mentoring, teleconferences, peer coaching, professional observations, sharing groups, practitioner inquiry, action research, independent study, training modules, online services, and site-based trainings. Through all these opportunities, teacher learning and student learning go hand and hand. This means practitioners need to learn in the same ways that we want learners to learn. If, for instance, cooperative learning is successful in our classrooms, it can be a useful way for practitioners to learn as well.

With agencies striving for program improvement, professional development plays a key role. Unless teachers learn new ways to teach and administrators learn new ways of leading and organizing their agencies, the task for program improvement becomes a difficult one.

A network of practitioners

Just as the six regional Professional Development Centers are linked by a common network to share information on successes and challenges, each center encourages a network of adult education professionals throughout its region. Bringing practitioners together offers opportunities for sharing ideas and experiences and focusing on good practices. Participation in the professional development system helps to support the growth of ABLE agencies by providing meaningful opportunities for the practitioners related to their identified needs. In addition, the centers link local practitioners to the rest of the state by supporting initiatives such as training modules, ABLE Net, Learning From Practice, and EQUAL.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SUCCESS

Pennsylvania's professional development system has helped to enact great change in the way practitioners approach the delivery of services. The *Guiding Principles for the Professional Development of Adult Education Practitioners* developed by the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education state, "The mission of the professional development system is to provide professional development opportunities to adult education practitioners that result in the enhancement of adult learners' basic skills and competencies." Pennsylvania's Professional Development Centers are fulfilling that mission and look forward to further success in the future.■

Professional development through training modules

by Carol Molek

Adult education practitioners have the opportunity to participate in training in specific content areas through Training Modules offered through the Professional Development Center system. Training modules cover basic training in areas such as assessment, English as a second language, cooperative learning, case management, and math.

Assessment for Adult Learners presents the various purposes for assessment as they relate to gathering information to meet the needs of students, instructors, program administrators, and funding agents. It introduces two major types of assessment—standardized and informal—and the strengths and weaknesses of each toward providing information that meets various needs. It emphasizes that no assessment method is perfect in that it can provide all needed information. Rather, the module emphasizes looking closely at the strengths and weaknesses of a particular assessment and selecting assessments that provide information that programs, instructors, and students need. The module provides opportunities for hands-on exploration of assessments—guidance in selecting assessments and developing informal assessments. It also includes activities on connecting assessment to instruction and communicating results to students. Finally, it provides guidance on assessment planning.

Teaching Strategies for the Multilevel ESL Classroom reviews the factors necessitating multilevel ESL classes. It presents multilevel ESL lesson planning and learning strategies and provides opportunities for their practice and application. Different classroom groupings are demonstrated, and their advantages and disadvantages are covered. Cooperative learning strategies as applied in the multilevel ESL setting are also considered. Key components of cooperative learning are presented, and participants have opportunities to experience them and apply them to their own classroom settings.

The *Cooperative Learning* Module is designed for those working with ABE and/or ESL students. The purpose of the module is to provide a basic introduction to the use of cooperative learning in adult education classroom settings. The sessions are designed to model cooperative learning classrooms. Theoretical underpinnings to cooperative learning with specific strategies for organizing the learning environment are included in the training. Strategies for establishing a climate for student-centered learning are practiced. At the conclusion of the module, participants will have gained the understanding that incorporating cooperative learning structures, strategies, and techniques into their teaching plan is part of an ongoing process of learning for them as professionals.

Case Management for Adult Learners provides essential skills for adult educators. Adult educators often find themselves in the role of case manager because of the needs of their students. Instructors or tutors may enter this case management role with no educational or experiential background. This training module gives adult education practitioners the tools they need to better serve their adult learners, to manage information on learners' progress, and to develop accountability. The module provides a comprehensive look at case management in an adult basic/literacy education setting. (See page 17 for more on case management.)

Participants in the *Math as Problem Solving* Module discover ways to put an equal sign between "doing math" and "making sense." Group activities, all of which can be adapted to the classroom, reflect real-world situations and enable learners to develop concepts and understanding, use strategies and computations in meaningful context, break dependence on memorized rules, and find the value of diverse approaches. Participants will connect the goals of adult basic math education with recently adopted National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards, share hands-on activities that recognize and use problem-solving strategies, create math lessons using innovative strategies, and use manipulation and technology to ground and enhance instruction.

Additional training modules include: *Introduction to Learning Disabled Adults, Communicative ESL, Assessing Basic Skills of ESL Students, Assessing Basic Skills of Learning Disabled Adults,* and *How Adults Read.*

Training modules are a series of trainings designed for two or three sessions of several hours each. Face-to-face training time is about 12 hours. In addition, there are often outside readings required and application activities to do between sessions. Training is designed for groups of 15-30 adult educators. Locations of training is based on requests in your PDC region, so you should not have to travel far for the training. Follow-up support is provided by trainers and the PDCs. After completion of all module training requirements, a certificate of completion is issued. To request module training in any content area call your PDC. (See the listing on page 46.)■

VAVREK *Continued from page 42*

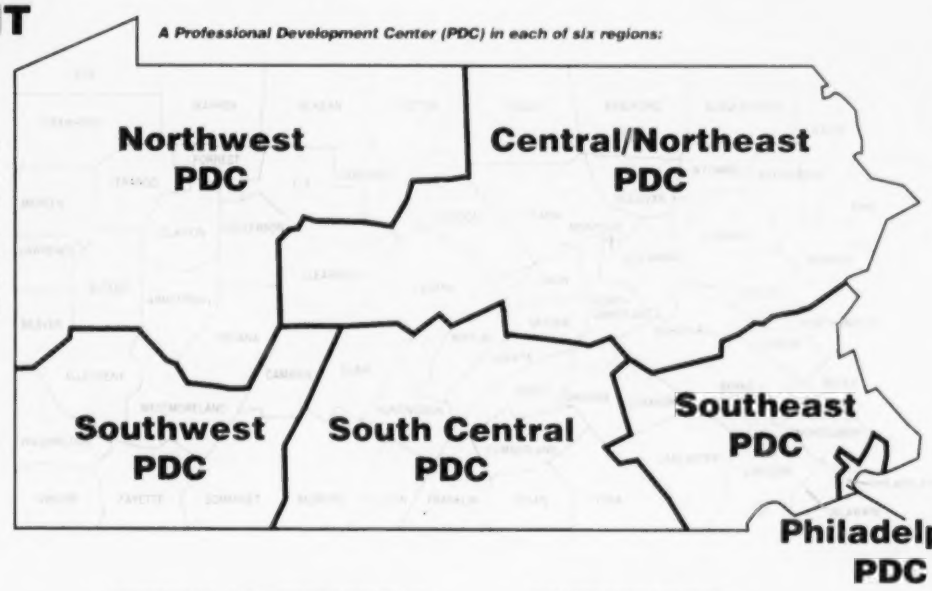
programs is to increase their ability to be a better family member and worker. The key is truly listening and helping the adult student to be understood.

6. Synergize—Value different opinions and perspectives when seeking solutions. Ideally, an adult educator and an adult student are a team working toward achieving the student's educational goal. Understanding the context in which the student places education is a key to effective teamwork. As a student preparing to be an adult educator, learning to work synergistically is an important ability.

7. Sharpen the saw—Continuously improve the physical, mental, spiritual, and social/emotional dimensions of life. An effective adult educator is always seeking self-improvement in order to better help the student. This a good habit to establish as an undergraduate preparing to be an adult educator since it is a key to being an effective person.■

PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

PDCs serve practitioners in adult basic and literacy education through training, research communities, and other professional development activities. *Counties served by each center are listed in italics.*



NORTHWEST PDC

Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cameron, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forrest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango, Warren
Richard Gacka, Director
Bootsie Barbour, Coordinator
Regina Rastatter, Staff Assistant
Northwest Tri-County IU #5
670 W. 36th St.
Erie, PA 16508-2645
Phone: 814-866-3775 ext. 223
Fax: 814-866-5045
E-mail: NorthWPDC@AOL.com, bootsie_barbour@smtp@trinet.k12.pa.us, rich_gacka@smtp.trinet.k12

CENTRAL-NORTHEAST PDC

Bradford, Carbon, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Lycoming, Monroe, Montour, Northumberland, Pike, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne, Wyoming
Edith A. Gordon, Director
Gail Leightley, Coordinator
Donna King, Staff Assistant
Central Intermediate Unit #10
Development Center for Adults
Centre Co. Vo-Tech School
540 North Harrison Road
Pleasant Gap, PA 16823
Phone: 814-359-3069
Fax: 814-359-2344
E-mail: CNEPDC@aol.com

SOUTHWEST PDC

Allegheny, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland
Donald Block, Director
Karen Mundie, Supervisor
Rachel Zilcosky, Coordinator
Sue Snider, Coordinator
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
100 Sheridan Square, 4th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-661-READ
Fax: 412-661-3040
E-mail: SWPDC2@aol.com

SOUTH-CENTRAL PDC

Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, Perry, York
Carol Molek, Director
Sara Plantz, Technical Coordinator
TIU Adult Ed. & Job Training Center
MCIDC Plaza, Building 58
6395 SR 103 North
Lewistown, PA 17044
Phone: 717-248-4942
Fax: 717-248-8610
E-mail: scpdc@acsworld.net

SOUTHEAST PDC

Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton
David P. Karl, Director
Sandra Strunk, Coordinator
Ilsa Powell Diller, Professional Developer
Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13
1 Cumberland St.
Lebanon, PA 17042
Phone: 717-270-2935 or 717-270-2936
Fax: 717-270-2943
E-mail: SEPDC1@aol.com

PHILADELPHIA PDC

Philadelphia
Rose Brandt, Director
Diane Inverso, Coordinator
Mayor's Commission on Literacy
1500 Walnut St., 18th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: 215-685-6602
Fax: 215-685-6620
E-mail: PHLPDC@aol.com, mcol@philadelphia.libertynet.org

'Learning from Practice' is firsthand professional development

by Alisa Belzer and Drucie Weiruch

Learning from Practice (LFP), an initiative supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE), has as its goal providing professional development opportunities for practitioners that result in quality programs and positive learning outcomes for students. *Practitioner inquiry* and *action research* are two approaches to Learning from Practice which share several common features. Both are based on the assumption that practitioners can build new knowledge for themselves and the field by generating and investigating questions that grow out of their day-to-day work concerns. Both approaches encourage practitioners to develop systematic research plans and collect descriptive qualitative data from their own worksites to inform their practice.

Participants write about their work in a final paper describing their question, methods of investigation, and findings with implications for practice. Rather than receiving knowledge from an "expert" or in a one-shot workshop, participants in action research and practitioner inquiry develop their own knowledge over time with the support and assistance of a professional community of colleagues. As practitioners participate in these communities, they develop new understandings of their work, create new ways of working with learners and colleagues, and develop leadership skills.

Practitioner inquiry and action research implement professional development that encourages "learning from practice" in somewhat different ways. The descriptions below can be useful in understanding the distinctions between these two approaches.

PRACTITIONER INQUIRY

Our work as teachers, tutors, and administrators presents us with new challenges every day as we strive to meet the needs of learners. Although we draw on previous training and on life and professional experiences in our efforts to help learners meet their goals, most of us have important and pressing questions and concerns for which there are no concrete or simple answers. Practitioner inquiry is a form of professional development which invites practitioners to come together over time to explore these kinds of questions. Inquiry-based professional development, available through the Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN) project statewide and Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP) in Philadelphia, provides opportunities for practitioners to form inquiry communities to collaborate in posing key questions and discussing critical issues from practice.

Inquiry groups meet on a regular basis to read, write, and talk about practice and current research literature, some of it written by practitioner researchers. These activities prompt individual and group analyses and meaningful critique of classroom and program-based needs and issues. They also build a professional community as participants share successes, struggles, and challenges. Growing out of these initial collaborative explorations, inquiry projects invite practitioners to investigate more deeply a question or problem that is particularly significant in their own day-to-day practice. Participants research their own questions by looking closely at their classrooms and programs, thus deepening their understanding of teaching and learning and of adult learners and literacy.

When research "data" are the actual products of practice—a teacher journal, student writing, tapes of conversations with students or colleagues—and "analysis" is the process of richly describing and making sense of what is collected, participants learn in systematic ways from and about their own practice. Inquiry groups create opportunities for teachers, tutors, and administrators to learn in ways that are ongoing, learner-centered, and participatory.

ACTION RESEARCH

To some, the word *research* connotes isolated, sterile, quantitative, often irrelevant data. However, in the Pennsylvania Action Research Network (PA-ARN) research is not isolated because it is done in a community of other practitioners, nor sterile because it openly involves others and evolves as a process, nor irrelevant because the problems are derived directly from practitioners' work. As Dr. Allan Quigley, the founder of PA-ARN states, "Research begins with a question and a desire for change," and as a former participant found, "Action research demystifies the idea of research."

One might say, "I do this all the time. I see a problem and deal with it." Action research uses a trial-and-error approach; however, action research is a *systematic* process with three phases: *planning* (problem, intervention, baseline, data collecting methods, measure, timeline); *action* (implementation and data collecting); and *reflection* (results, evaluation, recommendations).

The *plan* begins with identification of the problem. Participants receive a *Handbook* that describes the process and guides the research procedures. Brainstorming with colleagues, looking at what has been done in the past (at the agency and in the literature), and envisioning possibilities, the practitioner develops a "hunch" as to what intervention will solve the problem. To determine improvement, the participant must have a baseline and criteria for success. Participants receive help from their PA-ARN facilitator and colleagues and from a team of action research experts who review and provide constructive feedback for each plan.

The participant then *acts*, enacting the proposed implementation, collecting

Continued on page 48

Planning a local staff development program

by Linda V. McCrossan

Any topic that is needed to develop a strong organization, program, and staff is appropriate content for local staff development. Since it is the responsibility of each agency to provide quality service and accountability to its learners, community, and funding organizations, it is the responsibility of each agency to develop the strongest possible organization to do so.

In adult education, examples of pragmatic, or job-specific, skills and knowledge cover a wide range: how to operate the copy machine, what tests the agency uses, how tests are selected and ordered, how tutors and students are recruited, how enrollment and retention are articulated and managed within the organization, and what equal opportunity policies the organization needs and how to implement these policies.

The structure of local staff development can be formal or informal. Formal structuring requires a leader, a schedule indicating a start and stop time, an agenda indicating content, and a statement of intended behavioral change. Informal staff development occurs when staff members get together at naturally occurring locations—the coffee pot, the water cooler, the lunch table, in the hallway. In this second type of staff development, the organization supports an "in-house mentoring program" where all staff members work to help other staff members increase their skills.

Designing, scheduling, and participating in local staff development programs is the responsibility of all staff. Staff members are responsible for identifying their needs, if not in academic terms, then "I/we need to know more about how to do this" is the impetus for a staff development effort. In formal, structured staff development, a team leader needs to be in charge of each structured development opportunity. The team leader may be chosen by role, i.e. instructional leader, tutor, teacher, or student, or by knowledge of a special topic.

In informal staff development activities, everyone is a leader, and the sharing of information comes from all sources and at any time. One staff member may be reading a book and another may inquire about its content and how it addresses a question common to both staff members. In another example, a staff member may share her thoughts about using a particular test with certain types of programs and students.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

What resources does a program or organization need? The first resource is *time*. Staff need time to talk, to interact, to think, to exchange information, and to search out information by talking with colleagues and attending formal staff development activities. Time should be compensated and considered work time.

The second resource is *expertise*, available within the agency or from outside it. Several content areas provide excellent examples of this. Accessible policies on sexual harassment, organizational team building, equal opportunity, word processing, presentation skills, and using technology exist in large companies, the local Chamber of Commerce, local government, community agencies, and other adult education programs. Many organizations are looking for ways to volunteer that may not incur long-term commitments, so offering training may be a great opportunity. Look for volunteers among all sectors of the community. Many times the company representative in charge of corporate contributions will jump at the opportunity to provide volunteers to meet your agency's short-term training needs. Community agencies like to share information about their services, and your staff may need to know more about them to better serve your adult learners. Government offices and their employees are supported by public money and may be available to train people in their specific areas of knowledge.

Local staff development is the focal point of integrating and implementing knowledge from more structured, formal staff development activities outside of an organization. The local forum is the key bridge to program improvement.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING RESOURCES

Davenport, Thomas and Prusak, Laurence. (1998). *Working Knowledge: How Organizations Manage What They Know*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press.

Stamps, David. (1998). "Learning Ecologies," *Training*, January 1998.■

BELZER & WEIRUCH, *Continued from page 47*

data using a minimum of three methods. Consistency is important. During the action phase, participants are encouraged to connect with other participants with similar practice problems through a directory and the *Issues Network*, which categorizes problems by theme.

In *reflection*, data are carefully evaluated with the help of other action researchers. The practitioner makes recommendations for future cycles. The project is then systematically written about for dissemination.

TWO APPROACHES

Action research and practitioner inquiry both promote professional development and improve practice. Learning from Practice activities are administered through the regional Professional Development Centers. Facilitators in practitioner inquiry and action research implement regional, program-based, and statewide groups, meeting face-to-face and/or using technology, throughout the year. Opportunities are open to ABE, GED, and ESL teachers; volunteers; administrators; and other staff of ABLE-funded programs. Participation is voluntary, but must be approved by the participant's supervisor and regional Professional Development Center. For more information, contact your PDC.■

Pennsylvania State Literacy Resource Centers

by Christine Kemp and Cheryl M. Harmon

The AdvancE State Literacy Resource Center (SLRC) and the Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center (WPALRC) supply direct resource and staff development services to adult educators in Pennsylvania. The Centers are funded by the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education and administered by Commonwealth Libraries and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, respectively. Clients served include administrators, teachers, volunteers, counselors, researchers, and graduate students.

The SLRCs provide a communication link to local literacy providers through agencies such as the National Institute for Literacy, the National Center on Adult Literacy, and the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouse. These agencies provide a perspective on literacy goals, technology, and research, enabling the SLRCs to promote dissemination and adoption of successful new practices from and to Pennsylvania adult educators.

To enhance teacher preparation and research, the SLRCs circulate a variety of audio, video, software, and print instructional and professional materials from the specialized collections. With the help of a Resource Committee representing adult educators from across the Commonwealth, the collections are updated and expanded to support Bureau initiatives and provide the latest materials for tutoring and classroom use. The SLRCs disseminate Section 353 Special Demonstration Projects.

The SLRCs support the activities of the six regional Professional Development Centers by making on-site visits, assembling resources to support workshops, and performing research for special projects. The WPALRC facilitates meeting space for local providers and collaborates with the Distance Learning Center to provide teleconferencing capabilities. AdvancE emphasizes collection development and coordination of resources for state-of-the-art information retrieval and online database searching services.

The State Literacy Resource Centers of Pennsylvania support adult basic and literacy education through the coordination of literacy services; enhancing the capacity of state and local organizations to provide literacy services; and promoting the use of state-of-the-art teaching and assessment methods, technologies, and program evaluations. Free loans are available by calling AdvancE in Harrisburg, at 800-992-2283 or 717-783-9541, or WPALRC in Gibsonia, Allegheny County, at 800-446-5607 or 412-446-5607.■

PAACE

Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education

by Joan Y. Leopold

Whether you are a new practitioner to the field or a seasoned educator, your participation in the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education—PAACE, Pennsylvania's adult education professional organization—gives you the opportunity to network with a wide range of adult educators, sharing knowledge, expertise, and fresh approaches to the field. PAACE's mission is to serve the needs of adult learners through basic and higher education. Members are teachers, professors, tutors, administrators, counselors, students, librarians, and volunteers. They work in a variety of settings in basic and higher education, but the common bond is working with and for adult learners.

A Board of Directors governs the organization. The Board is comprised of elected officers and representatives of the eastern, central, and western portions of the Commonwealth; chairs of standing committees; advisory members; and representatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Any individual who has been a PAACE member for at least a year is qualified to hold office in the association. PAACE is associated with the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE).

PAACE strives to unite the profession, advocate adult and continuing education, and share information about adult education with each other and the public we serve. Through the Midwinter Conference, *PAACE News*, *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, and the *Membership Directory* this is accomplished.

PROGRAM DIVISIONS

PAACE's program divisions enable members to join together to strengthen and promote common interests. These divisions are an integral part of PAACE, since the Midwinter Conference program includes sessions reflecting the activities and concerns of the groups. They are divided into six divisions:

- *Adult Basic and Secondary Education*, including corrections, special needs, and armed services/veterans;
- *Higher Education*, including non-credit and continuing education;
- *Literacy* (TLC—Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth);
- *English as a Second Language;*
- *Workforce Development;* and
- *Family Literacy.*

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Individual—$30/year; Organizational—$70/year; Student—$22/year; Associate—$12/year; Life Membership—$250. For more information or a membership application, write to PAACE, Box 3796, Harrisburg, PA 17105 or call (717) 772-7561.■

National ABLE professional resources

by Cheryl M. Harmon

The National Literacy Act of 1991 mandated the operation of a number of clearinghouses for dissemination of adult basic and literacy information nationwide. Pennsylvania adult educators and tutors can utilize the services of the AdvancE State Literacy Resource Center and the Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center (WPALRC) and of several national clearinghouses and research centers operated through the United States Department of Education (USDOE).

Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) Clearinghouse. An in-house operation of DAEL and USDOE providing information on Adult Education Act (AEA) programs and innovative projects funded under the AEA. The *Bibliography of Resource Materials* is available by writing to: DAEL Clearinghouse, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20202-7240. (202) 205-9996. All USDOE-related agencies (OERI, NCES, NLE) which follow can be located online at www.ed.gov.

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). Funded by USDOE, 16 clearinghouses collect, analyze, and distribute information from many sources, compiling them in an electronic database of over 750,000 journal articles, research and project reports, and other documents. Searches of the ERIC databases are accessible through AdvancE; research briefs and digests are available online or through either SLRC. ERIC Adult, Career and Vocational Education Clearinghouse, 1900 Kenny Rd., Columbus, OH 43210-1090.

National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education (NCLE). This adjunct clearinghouse of ERIC provides information and technical assistance on services to limited English proficient (LEP) adults and out-of-school youth related to adult ESL and native-language literacy. Besides offering a substantial list of free publications on various topics, NCLE publishes a newsletter, *NCLE notes*, which is free on request from NCLE, 1118 22nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037. (202) 429-9292, ext. 200. Fax: (202) 659-5641.

National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). Administered under an interagency agreement among the U.S. Secretaries of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor, this agency has a national database, a toll-free number, and numerous online resources on literacy issues. NIFL sponsors fellowships on select studies to advance adult literacy. NIFL, 800 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20006-2021. (202) 632-1500. National Literacy Hotline (free, 24-hour referral service): (800) 228-8813. Internet: novel.nifl.gov.

National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL). Established at the University of Pennsylvania under funding from the U.S. Department of Education, NCAL focuses on research in adult literacy and on technology. With PBS, NCAL sponsors a Web site—LiteracyLink—to provide teacher, tutor, and adult learner information. Its newsletter, *NCAL Connections*, is available on request at no charge from NCAL, University of Pennsylvania, 3910 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111. (215) 898-2100. Fax: (215) 898-9804. Internet: www.literacyonline.org.

National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center. Funded by the National Institute for Literacy under a cooperative agreement with the Academy for Educational Development in collaboration with the University of Kansas Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities. National ALLD Center, Academy for Educational Development, 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009-1202. (202) 884-8185 or (800) 953-ALLD. Fax: (202) 884-8429 or -8422. Internet: info@nalldc.aed.org (e-mail) and novel.nifl.gov (Web).

National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) provides a headquarters for family literacy program planning and evaluation. Even Start is one kind of program which uses the training provided by NCFL. Waterfront Plaza, Ste. 200, 325 W. Main St., Louisville, KY 40202-4251. (505) 584-1133.

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL). Nichols House, Harvard University Graduate School of Education, Cambridge MA 02138. Internet: ncsall@hugse1.harvard.edu. Details in article on page 51.

National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries and Lifelong Learning (PLLI) seeks to expand knowledge about the education and training of adults in a variety of settings, including postsecondary, institutions, community-based education programs, libraries, and the workplace. The Institute maintains an ongoing program of activities designed to inform the field about educational research, development, and dissemination. U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW Washington, DC 20208-5531. (202) 219-2207. Fax: (202) 501-3005.

National Center for Education Statistics. The purpose of the Center is to collect and report " ... statistics and information showing the condition and progress of education in the United States and other nations in order to promote and accelerate the improvement of American education." U.S. Department of Education, OERI/NCES, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20208-5574. (202) 219-1828.

National Library of Education. "The mission of the Library shall be to become a principal center for the collection, preservation, and effective utilization of the research and other information related to education and to the improvement of educational achievement." OERI/NCES, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington. DC 20208-5574. 202/219-1828.■

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF ADULT LEARNING AND LITERACY (NCSALL)

by John P. Comings

The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL—pronounced "NICK-sall") is the U.S. Department of Education's national research and development center for adult learning and literacy. NCSALL's goal is to provide answers to questions about how to improve your practice, through a program of research and dissemination. At this writing, NCSALL is pursuing ten major research projects:

- *Assessment:* exploring the impact that participation in programs has on adults' lives, ways to assess this impact, and measures of instructional outcomes that predict that impact.
- *Longitudinal Study:* building a national longitudinal data-collection structure that can follow adult learners over time to look at patterns of participation, impact, achievement, and factors that lead to successful learning.
- *Staff Development:* exploring the outcomes for practitioners and programs of participation in the most common approaches to staff development.
- *Health and Adult Literacy and Learning:* exploring the benefits of introducing health topics into adult education classes in order to inform both the adult education and public-health communities about those benefits.
- *Literacy Practices of Adult Learners:* examining how adults in literacy classes use literacy skills in their daily lives, the relationship between that use and achievement, and the interventions that best increase everyday use.
- *Adult Multiple Intelligences:* examining how the multiple intelligences theory can support and enhance instruction and assessment in programs.
- *Adult Reading Components Study:* developing a portrait of the instructional strengths and needs in reading of adults enrolled in adult basic education (ABE) and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) classes.
- *Adult Development:* studying how the theory that the demands of modern life require a transformation of cognitive and emotional skills in adults applies to the ABE, ESOL, and adult secondary education (ASE) population and how this can help teachers improve curriculum and methods.
- *Learner Motivation:* studying the forces that both support and hinder adult learner persistence in ABE programs and how programs can use this knowledge to improve learner retention.
- *GED Impact:* investigating the economic impact of acquiring a GED.

Teachers can find out more about these studies and learn from other research in the following ways:

1. Read *Focus on Basics*, a quarterly review of research and best practice written for practitioners. Each volume focuses on a different issue.
2. Visit NCSALL's Web site at http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~ncsall (or through the LINCS system at www.nifl.gov).
3. Read the *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy* (beginning 1998). Each issue of this will be an annual volume of articles, each of which will review all of the research and best practices on a particular subject.

You can reach NCSALL at Nichols House, Harvard University Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA 02138 or at ncsall@hugse1.harvard.edu.■

TLC: Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth

by Amy Wilson

Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth (TLC) connects more than 100 organizations in all 67 counties of Pennsylvania. Member organizations share a common mission of providing literacy instruction to adults. Adult learners are guided, taught, and assisted in the accomplishment of their goals by a trained network of volunteer tutors. The general mission of Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth is to encourage adult literacy education in Pennsylvania. The membership meets quarterly in September, November, February, and April. Meetings include the business of the organization and professional training. The organization also sponsors the Northeast Regional Adult Literacy Conference for literacy providers, and in 1997 Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth introduced the first adult learner conference to develop student leadership throughout Pennsylvania.

The specific mission of Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth is to provide professional excellence in the training of volunteer tutors and, therefore, excellence in literacy instruction. Quality, high-impact instruction is the goal. Tutors are trained in a variety of skills and strategies in order to provide instruction most effectively suited to individual adult learner goals and learning styles. Tutor training includes effective communication, goal setting, the process of learning, teaching strategies, lesson planning, etc. Since 1981, member organizations of Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth have sponsored the training of at least 15,000 tutors, who in turn have tutored approximately 30,000 adults. Literacy instruction includes teaching knowledge and skills in reading, writing, mathematics, conversational English, and the application of learning to life.

TLC is financially supported by the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education under Act 143. As such, the organization provides training to literacy programs in Pennsylvania at no charge. Volunteer tutor trainings include: Basic Adult Literacy Tutor Training, English As A Second Language Tutor Training, Small-Group Tutor

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Online staff development tools

by KayLynn Hamilton and Debra Burrows

The Internet can provide practitioners with almost unlimited resources for staff development. These resources are most frequently accessed through listservs and Web sites which allow practitioners to converse with colleagues across the state or around the world, peruse publications and research reports, keep abreast of trends, follow legislative initiatives, and identify funding sources.

MAILING LISTS

A *listserv*, or mailing list, is a means of exchanging information via electronic mail with a group of people who share a common interest. Generally, the list has an e-mail address and anything that someone sends to that address will be sent to everyone that has subscribed to the list. To subscribe to a list, an individual needs to send a subscription request via e-mail to the list or sign up on the list's Web site. A subscription request usually contains the following: SUB, the name of the list, and the new subscriber's real name. It is also important to know how to unsubscribe from a list. Instructions for unsubscribing are usually contained in the first message sent to the new subscriber from the list. Save this message for future reference.

The following listserv sites focus on topics of interest to adult education practitioners:

- AEDNET (Adult Education Network): listserv@alpha.acast.nova.edu
  Subjects: Adult Education, Adult Literacy
- Literacy: listserv@nysernet.org
  Subjects: Family Literacy, English as a Second Language, Workplace Literacy
- NIFL-ALLD (National Institute for Literacy): listproc@novel.nifl.gov
  Subjects: Learning Disabilities, ESL, Family Literacy, Workplace
- NLA (National Literacy Advocacy List): majordomo@world.std.com
  Subjects: Adult Literacy, Adult Learning
- NWAC-L: listserv@psuvm.psu.edu
  Subjects: Workplace Literacy, Job Training, Training
- TESL-ES (English as a Second Language): listserv@cmsa.berkley.edu
  Subject: ESL
- TESL-L (Teachers of English as a Second Language): listserv@cunyum.cuny.edu
  Subjects: ESL, Computer Literacy, Technological Literacy, Educational Assessment, Workplace Literacy, Work Environment
- Tutor-Announce-L (International Tutoring Project): listserv@edie.cprost.sfu.ca
  Subjects: Tutoring, Tutors
- VOCNET (National Center for Research on Vocational Education): listserv@cmsa.berkley.edu
  Subject: Vocational Education
- Publicly accessible mailing lists: www.neosoft.com/internet/pam

WEB RESOURCES

The World Wide Web is a telecommunications system among networks of computers that share information by means of hyperlinks. These hyperlinks connect Web sites, using text, graphics, and sound to convey information on a computer monitor. In recent years companies, organizations, government agencies, and individuals have set up Web sites. Many of these are informational in nature and allow almost immediate access to large databases, publications, shopping networks, federal and state tax forms, job vacancy announcements, etc. The World Wide Web is increasingly becoming a resource where adult educators can find useful information for both professional development and instructional purposes. Various sites allow teachers to share lesson plans, review research findings, obtain workshop and in-service training schedules, etc.

A word of caution: It is now possible for almost any individual or organization worldwide to create and post information on the Web. Sometimes sites that look "official" may contain inaccurate or misleading information. Practitioners should take care to determine the validity of information contained in Web sites or to determine the author or owner of the site.

The following sites contain useful information for adult education practitioners. All URLs (addresses) are preceded by http://.

- ABLEsite: www.cas.psu.edu/docs/pde/able/ablesite.html
- ABLE Net: www.lhup.edu/~lhinman
- Link2Learn Professional Development: L2L.ed.psu.edu
- American Association of Adult and Continuing Education: www.albany.edu/aaace
- AdvancE: accesspa.brodart.com/search/pz/pacon15c.html
- Literacy Online: www.literacyonline.org
- Eastern LINCS: hub1.worlded.org
- Southern Literacy Communication Consortium: tlrc.tamu.edu/slcc
- Midwest LINCS: archon.educ.kent.edu/Midwest/index.html
- National Institute for Literacy: novel.nifl.gov
- Top 10 Literacy Sites on LINCS on the Web: novel.nifl.gov/top10/index.html

Because of the rapid rate of development in the area of online resources, changes occur frequently in listserv and Web site locations. Such changes may affect those listed above.■

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Training, Critical Thinking Skills, and Study Skills and Memory Techniques. Trainings reflect emerging adult learning theories and practices. Trainings are offered through a system of regional trainers, whose responsibilities include training new trainers, training supervising trainers, as well as training tutors. TLC also offers training certification.

Unique to Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth is a regional network of leaders representing adult learners. These new readers assist literacy programs in assessing the unique needs of learners and developing local leadership. TLC supports the representatives' professional development and their participation at national conferences.

Both organizations and individuals may become involved with Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth. Also, Pennsylvania Association of Adult Continuing Education members may select TLC as their special-interest program division. From July 1998 through June 2000, Diana Statsman of the Scranton Council for Literacy Advance will direct the program with the guidance of the executive board. For more information contact her at (717) 346-6203.■

The adult educator's essential bookshelf

by Cheryl M. Harmon and Christine Kemp

This bookshelf cites many resources which are recommended to the adult educator for continuing professional development. Although ABLE programs should have a resource library for the use of staff, volunteers, and interested students, the individual educator is encouraged to build a personal professional collection.

Most of the references are available from either State Literacy Resource Center to preview.

- AdvancE: (800) 992-2283 in PA or (717)783-9541; fax (717) 783-5420
- WPALRC: (800) 446-5607, ext. 216 in PA or (412)961-0294; fax (412)443-1310

Following is a sampling of easily accessible resources for the adult educator to consider for an essential bookshelf. There are many broad headings in adult basic and literacy education; the nuances of emerging issues can be explored further by starting with some basic references. We've listed them here title first, with informal annotations, rather than as a formal bibliography.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Section 353 Project Abstracts for the Fiscal Year 19xx-19xx. Sources: AdvancE State Literacy Resource Center and Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education. This annual publication provides abstracts of Section 353 adult education grant projects. The booklet indexes completed projects by subject, such as curriculum, research, family, and workplace literacy, ESL, tutoring, and special learning needs. Any Section 353 project may be borrowed from either Resource Center and copied for staff/program use.

Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education. S.B. Merriam & P.M. Cunningham. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 1990. Collection of 48 chapters by 69 authors on: adult education as a field of professional practice, adult learners and the educational process, major providers of educational programs for adults, and adult education program areas and special clienteles.

Designing Instruction for Adult Learners. Gary J. Dean of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Kreiger Publishing, 1994. Presents a model for instructors to gather information, develop an instructional plan, and evaluate the plan. This book indicates that the process is comprehensive and can be applied to wide variety of settings.

Speaking of Reading. Natalie Rosenthal. Heineman, 1995. By the author of *Teach Someone to Read*, the book shares oral histories from diverse readers. Rosenthal invites reader to "think about our own reading histories." Categories of readers include: "frustrated readers," "habitual readers," and "information readers," with up to 11 readers per section.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Principles and Practices in Applied Linguistics. Guy Cook and Barbara Seidlhofer, editors. Oxford University Press, 1995. Anthology of works in language acquisition with case studies.

Adult ESL Literacy: State of the Art. Aguirre International, 1992. Available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 7420 Fullerton Rd., Ste. 110, Springfield, VA 22153, (800) 443-ERIC. This literature review provides an overview of key ESL issues as they are reflected in literature.

LITERACY ISSUES AND RESEARCH

Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Results of the National Adult Literacy Survey. National Center for Education Statistics, 1993. The aim of this survey was to profile the English literacy of adults in the United States based on performance across a wide array of tasks that reflect the types of materials and demands they encountered in daily lives. The report described types and levels of literacy skills demonstrated in document, prose, and quantitative literacy and analyzed the variation in skills across major social, economic, and earnings subgroups in the population.

Rethinking Literacy Education. B. Allan Quigley. Jossey-Bass, 1997. Provides a framework for practitioners to improve effectiveness of literacy education by "starting with the learner" and addressing work, family, and cultural considerations.

ADULT LEARNERS / RESOURCES

Freebies for ABLE. Tana Reiff, Section 353 Special Demonstration Project, 1997. Catalog of free materials useful to instructors and to adult learners. Complete "send away for" information is provided; several Web sites are included; tips for using the catalog in the classroom are given.

Creating Environments for Effective Adult Learning. Roger Hiemstra, editor. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, No. 50, Summer 1991. Jossey-Bass, Inc. Publishers, San Francisco. Anthology of writings by ten authors on developing hospitable learning environments for adults. Includes space/facilities/equipment considerations, attitudes, etc.

Just Say It! How to Write for Readers Who Don't Read Well. A Training Manual for Writers. PLAN (Push Literacy Action Now!), 1332 G St. SE, Washington DC 20003. This binder contains straightforward directions on how to identify, translate, and simplify documents which need plain language. The authors consider both literacy students and literate readers to instruct in writing documents that are easy to understand and can be checked using readability formulas.

Assessing Adult Learning. Joseph J. Moran. Kreiger Publishing, 1997. Purpose is to help adult educators become skillful in conducting informal assessment of learning. Chapters include Strategies and Tactics, Paper and Pencil Testing, and Principles of Informal Assessment.

FAMILY LITERACY

Monographs: *A Strengths Model for Learning in a Family Literacy Pro-*

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gram, Dr. Meta Potts, 1994. *Policy Maker's Guide to Understanding Family Literacy*, 1994. *A Guide for Funding Sources for Family Literacy*, 1993. National Center for Family Literacy. Detailed booklets for initiating and improving family literacy programs. Useful for program administrators and staff working directly in programs.

WORKPLACE LITERACY

State Level Policy for Workplace Basic Education: What Advocates are Saying. Paul Jurmo, National Institute for Literacy. Literacy Leader Fellowship Program Reports, 1996. Report of findings during study of state-level planning for workforce development. Practitioners may select from among a number of these types of reports at a low cost.

TUTORING

Adult Literacy Handbook for Students and Tutors, 5th ed. Anita Pomerance, Center for Literacy, 1993. CFL's handbook is a companion to CFL training workshops and a resource for adult literacy tutors and students in any program. Many subject areas are covered with specific instructional strategies to meet students' needs.

SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS

The Americans with Disabilities Act: Questions and Answers. Write for copies to U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1801 L. St. NW, Washington DC 20507. Also available in alternate formats including online; call (202) 514-6193.

National Informational Resource Guide: Adults and Adolescents with Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorders. Learning Disabilities Research and Training Center, University of Georgia, 1997. A guide for consumers, their families, the professionals who work with them, and those who write policy.■

Desert island picks

Some of our authors offered lists of essential adult education books as well. Additional resources are listed in many of the articles in this *Handbook*.

FOR LITERACY PRACTITIONERS

offered by Linda Herr

Cheatham, Colvin, Laminack (1993). *Tutor: A Collaborative Approach to Literacy Instruction.* Syracuse, NY: Literacy Volunteers of America.

Cheatham, Clarke, McKay, et al. (1994). *Whole Language for Adults: A Guide to Instruction.* Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press.

Feichtner, S. (1995). *The Janus Employability Skills Program.* Belmont, California: Globe Fearon.

Kimeldorf, M. (1994). *Job Search Education.* New York, NY: Educational Design, Inc.

Teaching Adults: A Literacy Resource Book. (1994). Syracuse, NY, New Readers Press.

ON ASSESSMENT

offered by Carol Molek

Horn, B.V., Carmen, P., Askov, E., and Jenkins, S. (1995). *Assessment and Adult Learners.* A Section 353 project by Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, Penn State University.

Moran, J. (1997). *Assessing Adult Learning: A Guide for Practitioners.* Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.

ON PRACTITIONER INQUIRY

offered by Alisa Belzer

Cochran-Smith, M. and Lytle, S. L. (1993). *Inside/Outside: Teacher research and knowledge.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Gowen, S. G. (1992). *The politics of workplace literacy.* New York: Teachers College Press. (Recommended for those researching workplace literacy.)

Smith, F. (1985). *Reading without nonsense.* New York: Teachers College Press. For those researching reading.

ON FAMILY LITERACY

offered by Joe Norden and Sharon Brentley

Auerbach, E. (1989). Toward a socio-contextual approach to family literacy. *Harvard Educational Review, 59* (2).

Brizius, J. and Foster, S. (1993). *Generation to Generation: Realizing The Promise of Family Literacy.* Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press. A discussion of issues which affect families, with suggestions to assist program building and parent-child learning.

Gabler, C. and Goethel, J. (1996). *The Path to Family Literacy: Building a Comprehensive Program Step By Step.* Eau Claire, WI: LVA—Chippewa Valley and Steck-Vaughn. Another valuable, practical resource.

Hibpshman, T. (1989). *An explanatory model for family literacy programs.* (Report No. CE 053 727). Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Research and Planning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 313 531)

McShane, S. P. (1996). *Outcomes And Measures In Family Literacy Programs.* Louisville, KY: National Center For Family Literacy. An excellent resource pertaining to assessment instruments used in family literacy programs.

Nickse, R. (1993). *A typology of intergenerational literacy programs: Implications for evaluation.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 362 706)

Padak, N. and Cook, D. (1990) *Family Literacy Programs Training Manual.* Columbus, OH: Ohio State Dept. of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 329 731)

AN ECLECTIC SELECTION

offered by Sondra Stein

Bateson, M. (1994). *Peripheral Visions: Learning Along the Way.* New York: Harper Collins.

Fingeret, H. and Drennon, C. (1997). *Literacy for Life: Adult Learners, New Practices.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Heath, S. *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms.* (1983). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

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Newsletters and conferences for ABLE practitioners

by Dave Fluke

Professional newsletters play an important role in the professional development of adult educators. Part of the reason is the speed with which a newsletter can convey information to the educators in the field; part is the cost-effectiveness of printing technology; part is due to the demands upon the time of persons in our profession. Most adult educators find that newsletters offer a readable, succinct statement of developments in adult basic and literacy education, along with information which helps them improve the quality of their adult education services and reading material that is appropriate to their lifestyle.

Many of the 300+ newsletters in the field of adult education are targeted to specific areas such as ESL or the GED. Therefore, the following list is not intended to be definitive, but it is a good starting point for adult educators.

Focus on Basics is published quarterly by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, World Education, 44 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210-1211, FOB@WorldEd.org. In line with its goal of helping adult educators become more critical consumers of research, the newsletter discusses research findings and their implications, as well as works in progress. *FOB* is available by subscription for $8 per year, is distributed to programs by most State Departments of Education, and can be downloaded from hugse1.harvard.edu/~ncsall.

Reading Today, from the International Reading Association (800 Barksdale Rd., Newark, DE 19714), looks at all phases of teaching reading, including adult education. It examines controversies such as that between whole language and phonics approaches and reports on new developments and resources.

NIFL *News* is published by the National Institute for Literacy (800 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20202). It reports on NIFL's nationwide literacy public awareness campaign and NIFL initiatives such as *Equipped for the Future*.

A.L.L. Bulletin, from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (600 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202), contains a wide variety of information about developments in USDE and adult basic and literacy education, as well as information about local programs selected as exemplary.

Hands-on English is published by a former ESL teacher (P.O. Box 256, Crete, NE 68333). Readers will find lots of teaching and learning activities designed for direct classroom use. An excellent resource for ESL teachers.

NCLE notes, published by the National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (CAL, 1118 22nd St., NW, Washington, DC 20037), reports on recent research and developments in ESL instruction across the country.

GED Items, published by the General Educational Development Testing Service (GEDTS, American Council on Education, One DuPont Circle, NW, Ste. 250, Washington, DC 20036), reports on recent developments in the GED tests as well as professional development information for instructors and test administrators.

Learning disAbilities is published by Dr. Richard Cooper (Center for Alternative Learning, P.O. 716, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010) and provides information and resources about adult education and students who use alternative learning styles. *Linkages* is the free newsletter of the National Adult Literacy & Learning Disabilities Center (Academy for Educational Development, National ALLD Center, 1875 Connecticut Ave. NW, Floor 9, Washington, DC 20009).

Family literacy educators may contact the National Center for Family Literacy (Waterfront Plaza, Ste. 200, 325 W. Main St., Louisville, KY 40202) and request that their names be put on the mailing list for *Update*. NCFL is a strong advocacy organization on behalf of family literacy and the newsletter keeps readers aware of recent developments in the field.

Newsletters free with organizational membership include *PAACE News* (Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education, Box 3796, Harrisburg, PA 17105-3796, PAACE@aol.com); *TESOL Quarterly* (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1600 Cameron St., Ste. 300, Alexandria, VA 22314-2751, (703) 836-0775); and *Adult Learning* (American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), 1200 19th St. NW, Ste. 300, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 428-5131).

The Adult Numeracy Network's newsletter, *The Math Practitioner*, edited by Pennsylvanian Ellen McDevitt, keeps readers up to date on developments and research findings in the field of math instruction. To join ANPN and receive the newsletter, contact Rose Steiner, Billings Adult Education Center, 415 N. 30th St., Billings, MT 59101.

Although not devoted exclusively to adult basic and literacy education, *Multicultural Messenger* is one of the few newsletters that reports on matters of concern in multicultural education. It primarily deals with the K-12 setting, but often includes reports on activities appropriate to adult education. Call (800) 822-1080.

Another useful K-12 newsletter is *Northwest Report* (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 105 S. Main St., Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204). NWREL is a leader in the field of educational research and is a comprehensive source for published resources, including those in adult education.

Literacy tutors will want to receive *LitScape*, published by Laubach Literacy Advance (LLA, Box 131, Syracuse, NY 13210). The newsletter combines information about recent developments in Laubach Literacy with practical information for tutors and news of resources and publications.

What's the Buzz? is distributed free to adult basic and literacy education practitioners in Pennsylvania under a grant from the federal Adult Education Act. It is a comprehensive source of information about the latest developments

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in our field, including legislation and funding. *The Buzz* also reports on conferences and meetings held across the state, contains a page devoted to information for instructors, features a People and Programs page, lists a calendar of upcoming events, and summarizes key articles from other newsletters. Contact Adult Education Linkage Services, Box 214, Troy, PA 16947.

FOCUS Bulletin is a free newsletter featuring exemplary 353 projects. Source: Royce and Royce, 1938 Crooked Oak Dr., Lancaster, PA 17601. Both *Focus* and *What's the Buzz?* are available for free download at ABLEsite, www.cas.psu.edu/docs/pde/able/ablesite.html.

Research-related publications are available from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Most ERIC publications are available from the State Literacy Resource Centers. To receive *ERIC Digests and Occasional Papers*, a list of free resources, send a self-addressed, stamped (2 oz.) #10 envelope to User Services Coordinator, ERIC/ACVE, 1900 Kenny Rd., Columbus, OH 43210-1090.

Other excellent sources of newsletter information are the Professional Development Centers. Be sure you get on the mailing list of the PDC serving your region.

CONFERENCES OF NOTE

One estimated count of conferences, workshops, meetings, and other functions geared toward the professional needs of adult basic and literacy education placed the number at more than 300 each year. *What's the Buzz?* each month has a calendar page which notes those conferences which might appeal to adult education practitioners in Pennsylvania.

Each spring your program director submits a budget to the Bureau of ABLE for the following year which includes an item for travel and/or meeting expenses. Discuss meeting attendance with your program director in accordance with your agency's policy on release time for professional development activities.

Professional Development Centers (PDCs) are the front line of regional professional development activities. Most PDCs have a newsletter containing information about PDC-sponsored activities. Monthly events offered by PDCs are listed on the Web site of the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education: www.cas.psu.edu/docs/pde/able/ablesite.html.

The Adult Education Midwinter Conference is held in early February at Hershey and is *the* event to attend for sharing and comparing with colleagues, visiting displays by adult education publishers, and learning from more than 70 concurrent sessions and discussion groups. The three-day conference is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education (PAACE) and members receive a discount on registration fees. Contact PAACE at Box 3796, Harrisburg, PA 17105.

The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) is the national organization with which PAACE is affiliated. The national AAACE conference is usually held in November. Contact AAACE at 1200 19th St., NW, Ste. 300, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 429-5131.

The Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) is a national affiliate of AAACE that represents the field of adult basic education. As such, its conference's content is more specific than the AAACE Conference and provides more opportunity for discussion and sharing with ABLE colleagues. Contact COABE through AAACE.

The National Conference of the National Association for Adults with Special Needs (NAASLN) is an excellent opportunity for adult educators working with special-needs adults to share ideas and learn about promising practices and research developments. It is usually held in September. Contact Dr. Richard Cooper, P.O. Box 716, Bryn Mawr, PA (610) 446-6126.

Other national conferences which may appeal to adult basic and literacy educators are:

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Usually in November. Contact NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801.

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), usually in March. Contact TESOL, 1600 Cameron St., Ste. 300, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Laubach Literacy Action (LLA) biennial conference, usually in June. Contact LLA, 1320 Jamesville Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210.

National Conference on Family Literacy, usually in April. Contact National Center for Family Literacy, Waterfront Plaza, 325 W. Main St., Ste. 200, Louisville, KY 40202.

International Reading Association (IRA), usually in May. Contact IRA, 800 Barksdale Rd., Newark, DE 19714.

PENNSYLVANIA EVENTS

The Pennsylvania Coalition for Adult Literacy (PSCAL) presents four Forums each year in Harrisburg which are open to all adult educators; no fee. Excellent programs with qualified speakers. Contact PSCAL, Joanne Shane Plummer, (717) 783-8769.

Pennsylvania Adult and Continuing Education Research Conference, usually in March. Contact Pat Lawler, Widener University, One University Place, Chester, PA 19013.

Keystone State Reading Association, usually in October. Contact KSRA, Linda Smith, RR2, Box 206, Olyphant, PA 18847.

Penn-TESOL usually holds its annual state conference in October or November. Contact Sherry Misheau, West Chester University, (610) 436-2898.■

DESERT ISLAND PICKS *Continued from page 54*

Horton, M. (1997). *The Long Haul*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Kegan, R. *In Over Our Heads*. (1995). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Merrifield J. et al. (1997). *Life at the Margins: Literacy, Language and Technology in Everyday Life*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Purcell-Gates, V. (1995). *Other People's Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Scribner, S. and Cole, M. (1981). *The Psychology of Literacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Stein, S. (1995). *Equipped for the Future: A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Learning and Literacy*. Washington, DC: NIFL.

Weisbord, M. (1989). *Productive Workplaces: Organizing and Managing for Dignity, Meaning and Community*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.■

GED TEST CENTERS IN PENNSYLVANIA

No.	County	Location	Address	City	Phone No.
0255	Adams	Lincoln IU 12	65 Billerback Rd. Box 70	New Oxford, PA 17350	(717) 624-4616
0475	Allegheny	Mon Valley GED Test Ctr	410 Ninth Avenue	McKeesport, PA 15132	(412) 664-7146
0630	Allegheny	Connelley Skill Learning	1501 Bedford Avenue	Pittsburgh, PA 15219	(412) 338-3740
0640	Allegheny	North Hills HS	53 Rochester Road	Pittsburgh, PA 15229	(412) 367-6078
0430	Armstrong	Armstrong SD	410 Main St. Adm. Bldg.	Ford City, PA 16226	(724) 763-7151
0500	Beaver	CC of Beaver County	One Campus Drive	Monaca, PA 15061	(724) 775-8561 x 125
0225	Bedford	Everett Area Sr. HS	North River Lane	Everett, PA 15537	(814) 652-9114 x 230
0660	Berks	Reading Area CC	10 S. 2nd St.	Reading, PA 19603	(610) 372-4721 x 280
0020	Blair	Altoona Sr. HS	1415 6th Ave.	Altoona, PA 16602	(814) 946-8278
0750	Bradford	Towanda Area HS	High School Drive	Towanda, PA 18848	(717) 265-2101
0860	Bradford	Wyalusing Valley Jr/Sr HS	RD 2 Box 7	Wyalusing, PA 18853	(717) 746-1498
0580	Bucks	Bucks Co. CC	Swamp Rd.	Newtown, PA 18940	(215) 968-8466
0595	Bucks	Upper Bucks Co. AVTS	3115 Ridge Road	Perkasie, PA 18944	(215) 795-2911
0060	Butler	Butler Area Sr. HS	165 New Castle Road	Butler, PA 16001	(724) 287-9721 x 256
0350	Cambria	Greater Johnstown	1091 Broad St.	Johnstown, PA 15902	(814) 533-5650
0210	Cameron	Cameron Co. HS	Woodland Avenue	Emporium, PA 15834	(814) 486-3774
0340	Carbon	Carbon Co. AVTS	13th Street	Jim Thorpe, PA 18229	(717) 325-4140
0030	Centre	Bellefonte Area Sr. HS	830 E. Bishop St.	Bellefonte, PA 16823	(814) 355-4833
0125	Chester	Chester Co. Job Dev. Ctr.	1525 E. Lincoln Hwy.	Coatesville, PA 19320	(610) 524-5107
0722	Clarion	Clarion Co. AVTS	RD 2, Box 1976	Shippenville, PA 16254	(814) 226-4391
0115	Clearfield	Plymptonville School	410 Shaw St.	Clearfield, PA 16830	(814) 359-3069
0420	Clinton	Keystone Central AVTS	300 W. Church St.	Lock Haven, PA 17745	(717) 893-4941
0480	Crawford	Crawford Co. AVTS	860 Thurston Rd.	Meadville, PA 16335	(814) 724-6024
0070	Cumberland	Carlisle Area SD	723 W. Penn St.	Carlisle, PA 17013	(717) 240-6803
0720	Cumberland	Shippensburg Area HS	317 N. Morris St.	Shippensburg, PA 17257	(717) 530-2736
0280	Dauphin	HACC	One HACC Drive	Harrisburg, PA 17110	(717) 780-2480
0285	Dauphin	Penn State Harrisburg	1010 N. 7th St.	Harrisburg, PA 17102	(717) 772-3590
0090	Delaware	Showalter Middle School	1100 W. 10th St.	Chester, PA 19013	(610) 447-3650
0490	Delaware	Delaware Co. CC	Rt. 252 & Media Line Rd.	Media, PA 19063	(610) 359-5322
0680	Elk	Ridgeway Area HS	1403 Hill St.	Ridgeway, PA 15853	(814) 773-3156
0220	Erie	School District of Erie	1511 Peach St.	Erie, PA 16501	(814) 871-6252
0775	Fayette	IU 1 GED Test Center	1 IU Drive	Coal Center, PA 15423	(724) 938-3241
0810	Franklin	Waynesboro Area Sr. HS	E. Second St.	Waynesboro, PA 17268	(717) 762-1191
0460	Fulton	McConnellsburg HS	E. Cherry St.	McConnellsburg, PA 17233	(717) 485-3195
0318	Huntingdon	DuBois Business College Ctr.	1001 Moore St.	Huntingdon, PA 16652	(814) 643-6520, x259
0330	Indiana	Indiana Area Jr. HS	245 N. 5th St.	Indiana, PA 15701	(412) 463-8568
0670	Jefferson	Jefferson Co./Dubois AVTS	100 Jeff Tech Dr.	Reynoldsville, PA 15851	(814) 653-8265
0445	Juniata	Femanagh-Mifflintown ES	S. Seventh St.	Mifflintown, PA 17059	(717) 436-2111
0700	Lackawanna	Scranton Technical HS	Adams Ave. & Gibson St.	Scranton, PA 18510	(717) 348-3568, 3487
0365	Lancaster	Adult Enrichment Ctr.	31 S. Duke St.	Lancaster, PA 17602	(717) 293-7636
0550	Lawrence	Lawrence Co. AVTS	750 Wood Street	New Castle, PA 16101	(724) 458-6700
0385	Lebanon	Lebanon School Svcs.	1 Cumberland St.	Lebanon, PA 17042	(717) 274-0778
0010	Lehigh	Dieruff HS	815 N. Irving St.	Allentown, PA 18013	(610) 820-2205
0080	Lehigh	Catasaqua HS	850 Pine St.	Catasauqua, PA 18032	(610) 264-0506
0690	Lehigh	Lehigh Co. AVTS	4500 Education Park Dr.	Schnecksville, PA 18078	(610) 799-1357
0830	Luzerne	James M. Coughlin HS	80 N. Washington St.	Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701	(717) 826-7276
0305	Luzerne	Hazleton-Lackawanna JC	226 W. Broad St.	Hazleton, PA 18201	(717) 459-1573
0850	Lycoming	Williamsport Area SD	201 W. Third St.	Williamsport, PA 17701	(717) 327-5500 x 3506
0050	McKean	Bradford Area SD	81 Interstate Parkway	Bradford, PA 16701	(814) 368-6076
0650	McKean	Port Allegany HS	200 Oak St.	Port Allegany, PA 16749	(814) 642-2544
0496	Mercer	Mercer Co. AVTS	P.O. Box 152, Rte. 58	Mercer, PA 16137	(412) 662-3000
0405	Mifflin	Tuscarora IU 11	MCIDC Plaza, Bldg. 58	Lewistown, PA 17044	(717) 248-4942
0740	Monroe	Monroe Co. Vo-Tech	P.O. Box 66	Bartonsville, PA 18321	(717) 629-2001
0370	Montgomery	North Penn HS	1340 Valley Forge Rd.	Lansdale, PA 19446	(215) 368-0400 x 206
0590	Montgomery	Norristown Area HS	1900 Eagle Dr.	Norristown, PA 19403	(610) 630-5066
0040	Northampton	Liberty HS	1115 Linden St.	Bethlehem, PA 18018	(610) 867-0541
0160	Northampton	Easton Area HS	2601 Wm. Penn Hwy.	Easton, PA 18042	(610) 250-2501
0530	Northumberland	Mt. Carmel Area Jr. Sr. HS	W. Fifth St.	Mt. Carmel, PA 17851	(717) 339-1500
0600	Philadelphia	CC of Philadelphia	1700 Spring Garden St.	Philadelphia, PA 19130	(215) 751-8234
0605	Philadelphia	LaSalle Univ. - Urban Std.	1900 W. Olney Ave.Box 829	Philadelphia, PA 19141	(215) 951-1187
0610	Philadelphia	SD of Philadelphia	Broad & Green Sts.	Philadelphia, PA 19130	(215) 299-3387
0620	Philadelphia	Temple Univ. (MARC)	Broad & Berks Sts.	Philadelphia, PA 19122	(215) 204-8613, 8611
0450	Pike	Delaware Valley HS	Rte. 6 & 209	Milford, PA 18337	(717) 296-6496
0130	Potter	Coudersport Area HS	698 Dwight St.	Coudersport, PA 16915	(814) 274-8500
0440	Schuylkill	Lifelong Learning Center	Schuylkill Mall Rte. 61	Frackville, PA 17931	(717) 385-6711
0730	Somerset	Somerset Co. AVTS	RD 5 Vo-Tech Rd.	Somerset, PA 15501	(814) 443-3651
0355	Susquehanna	Mountain View Jr-Sr HS	Box 339 A	Kingsley, PA 18826	(717) 434-2181
0435	Tioga	Mansfield University	Placement Office	Mansfield, PA 16933	(717) 662-4133
0400	Union	Central Susquehanna IU 16	P.O. Box 213	Lewisburg, PA 17837	(717) 523-1155 x 325
0240	Venango	Central Elementary School	1276 Otter St.	Franklin, PA 16323	(814) 437-6991
0790	Warren	Warren County AVTS	347 E. 5th Ave.	Warren, PA 16365	(814) 723-6900
0800	Washington	Trinity HS	Park Avenue	Washington, PA 15301	(724) 225-5380
0310	Wayne	Wayne Highlands SD	474 Grove St.	Honesdale, PA 18431	(717) 253-4661
0380	Westmoreland	E. Westmoreland Voc.	849 Hillview Ave.	Latrobe, PA 15650	(724) 539-9788
0510	Westmoreland	Private Industry Council	531 S. Main St.	Greensburg, PA 15601	(724) 836-2600
0890	Westmoreland	Westmoreland Co. CC	College Station	Youngwood, PA 15697	(724) 925-4105
0760	Wyoming	Tunkhannock Area SD	120 W. Tioga St.	Tunkhannock, PA 18657	(717) 836-8213
0870	York	Wm. Penn Sr. HS	101 W. College Ave.	York, PA 17403	(717) 755-6254
0880	York	York AVTS	2179 S. Queen St.	York, PA 17402	(717) 741-0820

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Directory of writers

Judith A. Alamprese is a Principal Associate at Abt Associates Inc., 4800 Montgomery Lane, Ste. 600, Bethesda, MD 20814, (301) 718-3168. She currently is directing Project EQUAL and a number of research, evaluation, and policy development projects in adult literacy and basic education. In one of these projects, she is examining the ways in which research and evaluation results can be used to influence practice and policy in adult education.

Alisa Belzer is project director of the Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network. She has worked as a teacher, tutor, coordinator, and tutor trainer and has facilitated practitioner inquiry groups. Her work as a researcher has focused on assessment, student retention, learner beliefs about schooling, literacy and learning, and professional development. She may be reached at 1241 Rose Glen Road, Gladwyne, PA 19035, (610) 645-6514, belzera@aol.com.

Karen M. Bergey has a B.S. in education from Penn State University and a M.A. in TESOL from West Chester University. She has had 13 years of experience teaching ESL to both children and adults. She is an ESL instructor at the Adult Enrichment Center in Lancaster.

Sharon Brentley is an instructor and coordinator for Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council's Families For Learning Program. With Joe Norden she conducts family literacy programs at two public housing sites in Pittsburgh. Sharon taught at Head Start for four years before becoming a family literacy instructor in 1996. She is a certified teacher in humanities and secondary education.

Debra G. Burrows is Assistant Director of the Central Intermediate Unit Development Center for Adults, responsible for the West Branch Technology Center in Lock Haven, and faculty member of at Lock Haven University. She holds a B.S. in mathematics from Westminster College and an M.Ed. in Educational Administration from the Pennsylvania State University. She is responsible for the ABLE Net project, which provides technology training and support to adult basic and literacy education programs in Pennsylvania.

Sandra Choukroun is Director of Planning and Development at the Center for Literacy. Previously she served as Workforce Education Coordinator at the Center. She is an officer of the Philadelphia/Delaware Valley Chapter of the American Society for Training and Development.

Arlene Cianelli is Technology Coordinator, Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, 100 Sheridan Square, 4th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15206, (412) 661-7323.

John Comings is Director of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education.

Regina Cooper is a former volunteer with the Northampton Community College adult education program.

Richard Cooper, Ph.D., is Director/Learning Specialist for the Center for Alternative Learning, 6 E. Eagle Rd., Havertown, PA 19083, (800) 869-8336 or (610) 446-6126, Rcooper642@aol.com, www.learningdifferences.com.

Mary Ann Corley is Director of the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, 1875 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009-1202, (202) 884-8422.

Eric Epstein is the GED Testing Coordinator for Tri-County OIC and formerly taught at the Dauphin County Prison, SCI-Camp Hill and Loysville Secure Treatment Unit. He is also an Assistant Professor of Humanities at Penn State-Harrisburg and wrote *Dictionary of the Holocaust* with Dr. Philip Rosen.

Trenton Ferro, Ed.D., is Assistant Professor in, and Coordinator of, the Master of Arts in Adult and Community Education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 231 Stouffer Hall, 1175 Maple, Indiana University of PA, Indiana, PA 15705, (724) 357-2470.

Jean L. Fleschute is the executive director and a teacher for Community Learning Center (CLC). She has worked for CLC since it began more than 11 years ago. Jean attended the University of California at Berkeley where she completed a B.A. in English, course work toward a Master's in English, and secondary English certification through the Bay Area Writing Project.

Dave Fluke is the editor of the newsletter *What's the Buzz?*. He has been in adult education for more than 20 years and has served as an instructor in ABE and GED programs, in evening division programs at a four-year college, and in a university graduate program. As a member of the Board of Directors of PAACE, he co-chairs the membership committee and chairs the public relations committee.

Lori A. Forlizzi, Ph.D., is Trainer/Training Developer at Tuscarora Intermediate Unit's Adult Education and Job Training Center, Lewistown. She has worked adult education for 11 years. She has been involved in teaching, research, instructional materials development, and staff development. She is currently working with the state's Training Module projects, and co-authored the module on adult learner assessment.

Rich Gacka is Director of Administrative and School Services, Tri-County Intermediate Unit, serving as Director of Adult Education programs, Director of Tri-County Tech Prep Consortium, and Coordinator of the Erie Area School-to-Work Local Partnership. He holds a D.Ed. from Indiana University in curriculum and supervision and has done postdoctoral work at Penn State University in School Administration. He holds certification as IU Executive Director, Superintendent of Schools, Supervisor of Special Education, School Psychologist, and Elementary Education. He maintains private practice that includes educational consulting, psychological assessment, and grant writing.

Larry Goodwin is the State GED Administrator in the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education, 333 Market St., 12th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333. E-mail: lgoodwin@pa.net.

Samuel Gruber has been involved in public education since 1965. In 1970 he became a secondary administrator and coordinator of continuing education for the Cumberland Valley School District, Mechanicsburg. He was instrumental in starting the Cumberland Valley High School Diploma Program for Adults in 1978, through which more than 1,300 adults have earned a diploma.

Helen Hall is professional development advisor in the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education, 333 Market St., Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333, (717) 787-5532.

KayLynn Hamilton is Project Facilitator at Central Intermediate Unit #10, 110 E. Bald Eagle St., Lock Haven, PA 17745, (717) 893-4038, khamilto@eagle.lhup.edu. She is a member of the ABLE Net team, responsible for Master Trainer and Point of Contact training as well as technology planning. KayLynn has also served as a technology instructor for the West Branch Technology Center since its development in 1994.

Cheryl M. Harmon is Resource Specialist for the AdvancE State Literacy Resource Center in the Division of School Library Media, 333 Market St., Harrisburg PA 17105, (717) 783-9541. A librarian and educator, she specializes in information retrieval and research to provide data and materials to adult educators and tutors.

Lynette Hazelton is an adult education instructor at Dist. 1199C Training & Upgrade Fund, 1217 Sansom St., 3rd Fl., Philadelphia, PA 19107.

Linda Herr has been the Director of the Lycoming County Literacy Project since 1987. In addition to being the TLC Northeast Regional Training Coordinator, she has been a presenter at several conferences and is a member of the LLA state training team, a PDC module trainer, and a member of the Adult Basic and Literacy Education Interagency Coordinating Council. She may be reached at or lherr@jvbrown.edu or (717) 321-0200.

Diane C. Inverso, M.Ed., is the Philadelphia Professional Development Center Coordinator and the Resource Coordinator for the Mayor's Commission on Literacy, Philadelphia. She has been involved in the field of education for 23 years with eight of those years devoted to adult education.

Jacqueline Kitson Jackson, a literacy practitioner for 20 years, is a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania in Reading, Writing, and Literacy. By day her practice focuses on the literacy and counseling needs of women making transition from welfare to work. By night she serves as a literacy consultant for dually diagnosed women in a therapeutic community. Her interests include the development of adaptive curriculum for learning differences and the development of narrative therapy approaches to literacy and counseling.

Michelle Joyce is the Reading Specialist/ Workplace Coordinator for the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council. She holds a Master's Degree in Education and a Reading Specialist Certification. She has over seven years' experience in adult education, including ABE, GED, and workplace instruction.

Cheryl Keenan is Director of the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education, 333 Market St., 12th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333.

Chris Kemp is the Resource Specialist at the Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center, 5347 William Flynn Highway, Route 8, Gibsonia, PA, 15044-9644, in PA (800) 446-5607 ext. 273, or (724) 443-7821 or (412) 961-0294, wpalrc@pgh.nauticom.net. WPALRC serves the adult basic and literacy community, providing access to professional and instructional materials and federal projects.

Joan Y. Leopold is Director of Education at the Harrisburg State Hospital, Pouch A, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1300, (717) 772-7561. An adult educator for 25 years, she has taught mentally retarded adults, directed special projects for institutionalized populations, is curator of the Dorothea Dix Museum, and is Executive Director of PAACE.

Kelly Limeul is a teacher and administrator for Community Learning Center, 2801 Frankford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19134, (215) 426-7940, limeul@erols.com.

Trish Link has a B.S. from Penn State University and a M.Ed. from Lehigh University. She has been involved in adult education programs since 1977. Her current position is an Even Start Instructor and EQUAL Trainer at Lancaster-Lebanon I.U. #13.

Linda V. McCrossan, Ed.D., is the Executive Director of the Adult Literacy Center of the Lehigh Valley. An anthropologist and linguist, she is a specialist in the teaching of English as a Second Language. The emphasis of her doctoral degree from the University of Massachusetts was staff and program development and evaluation.

Ellen McDevitt is editor of *The Math Practitioner*, an international newsletter for adult educators who teach math to adults, and a founding member of the Adult Numeracy Network. She has worked in all areas of adult literacy instruction and program development and is principal of her own company, Workforce Development Partners, Training Specialists. She is the Master Trainer for the math module that is being used across the state.

Raiana Mearns, Southeast Regional Adult Education Advisor for the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, is a former coordinator and teacher of adult education in Adams County, Pennsylvania. In 1995-96 she was a member of the PA-ARN team while earning a M.Ed. in Adult and Continuing Education at Penn State, Monroeville. Her undergraduate degree is in Animal Science and she was once a dairy farmer. Raiana is the content specialist in ESL for the Bureau.

John Mihota is a teacher at Fayette County Community Action, 137 N. Beeson Ave., Uniontown, PA 15401, (412) 437-6050.

Carol Molek has been directing the Adult Education and Job Training Center in Mifflin County for over 14 years. She has directed over 60 353 projects in curriculum development and professional development. She is director of the South Central Professional Development Center and directs the Training Module and Train the Trainers projects. In 1997 Carol was named the PAACE Outstanding Adult Educator. She currently serves on the Commission on Adult Basic Education board of directors representing one of six national regions.

Ella Morin is the Chief of the Special Programs and Projects Division in the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education. She has also taught adult learners in GED and ABE classes, tutored Literacy students and provided instruction to workers at the workplace.

Karen Mundie, program director of the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, is a career adult educator with over 20 years of hands-on experience in adult basic and literacy education. She has presented at professional conferences both locally and nationally. She holds two master's degrees from the University of Virginia.

Joe Norden, Jr., is an instructor and coordinator for Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council's Families For Learning Program. With Sharon Brentley he conducts family literacy programs at two public housing sites in Pittsburgh. Joe served as adult educator at the McKeesport Even Start Family Literacy Program from 1993-97 and is presently doing research in family literacy. He has also written about the field in *Adult Learning*.

Tana Reiff, M.Ed., is project coordinator of AXIS, providing communication support for adult basic and literacy education practitioners in Pennsylvania through Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13.

Sheila Sherow has a doctorate in adult education from Penn State University and is employed as a literacy specialist at Penn State's Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy. She is coordinator of Building Communities for Learning, a community-based planning project under the direction of the Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy and funded through the Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education with a Section 353 grant.

Judy Sides is the ESL Program Manager for Catholic Charities' Immigration and Refugee Services. Over the past three years she has been responsible for planning and coordinating citizenship classes, in addition to general ESL classes and pre-vocational ESL classes. She may be reached at Catholic Charities 900 North 17th St., Harrisburg, PA 17103 or JudyASides@aol.com.

Sue Snider, M.Ed., is the Student/Tutor Support Specialist for Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council and Assistant Coordinator of the Southwest Professional Development Center (SWPDC). 100 Sheridan Square, 4th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15206, (412) 661-7323.

Dr. Sondra Gayle Stein is Senior Research Associate and Director of Equipped for the Future, National Institute for Literacy, 800 Connecticut Ave. NW, Ste. 200, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 632-1508, sstein@nifl.gov. Sondra has been working on issues related to accountability in adult basic and literacy education for the past decade. She has published reports and handbooks on program quality for the Massachusetts Interagency Literacy Group (1990), National Governors Association (1992), and Association for Community Based Education (1992, 1993).

Sandy Strunk is coordinator of the Southeast Professional Development Center and Training Coordinator for Project EQUAL. Sandy has worked in adult basic and literacy education for the past 14 years.

Barbara Van Horn, M.Ed., has taught ABE/GED classes and developmental reading and directed a volunteer literacy program. With Penn State's Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy since 1986, she is assistant director, responsible for designing curricula, instructional materials, and assessments; conducting educational research and evaluation; and consulting on development and evaluation of family, workplace, and health education programs. She has completed 353 projects for the Bureau of ABLE on assessment and adult learner competencies.

Dr. G. Michael Vavrek is Dean of Continuing and Distance Education at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania and past-president of the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education.

JoAnn Weinberger is Executive Director of Philadelphia's Center for Literacy. Annually, CFL serves over 2,800 adults, trains about 350 volunteer tutors, and offers community, family, workplace and education-for-work programs in over 100 sites. She is vice-chair of the statewide gubernatorial-appointed Act 42 Interagency Coordinating Council and named the legislative co-chair of PAACE.

Drucie Weirauch has been associated with action research since 1994, as a participant, Pennsylvania Action Research Network facilitator, and PA-ARN Field Director. She serves on the faculty in the department of Professional Studies in the College of Education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Amy Wilson is Training Coordinator for Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth and an adult education teacher with State College Area School District Community Education.

Jeffrey C. Woodyard is the Executive Director of Tri-County Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc. (OIC), Harrisburg, PA 17110, (717) 238-7318. He has worked in adult education since 1977 as an instructor, counselor, and program administrator for site-based and workplace-based programs. He has presented numerous workshops on workplace literacy, multi-level instruction, entry-level literacy skills, and school-to-work transitioning. Jeff is the current second vice-president of PAACE.

Lois Zinn is an ABE/GED teacher and administrator at Community Learning Center (CLC). She moved from New York to Philadelphia to attend the University of Pennsylvania's Reading, Writing, and Literacy program. Lois uses her writing and editing skills to help with fundraising and public relations at CLC and is involved in the Philadelphia Writing Project ■

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Publishers of ABLE curriculum resources

The following publishers or distributors offer curriculum materials for use in adult basic and literacy education programs. Only those sources who responded to our survey are included in this listing; their presence here does not constitute an endorsement of products by any party involved in the production or distribution of *The Pennsylvania ABLE Staff Handbook*. Offerings are indicated as follows:

- **LIT:** Adult Literacy/0-4 level
- **ABE:** Adult Basic Education/5-8 level
- **GED:** GED/ASE/9-12 level
- **ESL:** English as a Second Language for adults
- **PRO:** ABE/Literacy staff development materials

All materials are assumed to be in print format; however, lowercase letters following slashes indicate materials available in the following alternative formats:

- **a:** audio tape(s)
- **v:** video tape(s)
- **s:** computer software

Academic Skills
Tom Beebe Associates
1324 Edgewood Dr.
East Earl, PA 17519
Phone: 717-354-8568
Fax: 717-354-0264
LIT/s ABE/s GED/s ESL/s

Academic Therapy Pub./Ann Arbor/ High Noon Books
20 Commercial Blvd.
Novato, CA 94949
Phone: 800-422-7249
Fax: 415-883-3620
E-mail: atpub@aol.com
Web: www.atpub.com
LIT GED ESL

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Glossary of related terms, agencies, and organizations

Act 143 of 1986 Pennsylvania's state adult literacy education program designed to provide basic educational skills training in reading, English (including English as a second language), and mathematics.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) Federally funded programs designed for adults who have not attained functional competency in basic skills at the eighth-grade level. Also, the general designation for programs of instruction for adults at the basic skills/literacy level (also called ABE), English as a Second Language for adult immigrants and refugees (ESL), and General Educational Development (GED), or preparation for the GED tests.

Adult Education Act Act of Congress providing for ABE programs administered through each state with active local sponsorship, amended by the National Literacy Act of 1991.

adult learning center A place where adults voluntarily congregate to learn in a structured learning environment. It is open full time and may include counseling services.

AdvancE One of Pennsylvania's two State Literacy Resource Centers (SLRC), at PDE Resource Center, 333 Market St., 11th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333, (800) 992-2283 or (717) 783-9192; fax (717) 783-5420.

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) National and international association to promote learning opportunities for adults. Formed in 1982 as a consolidation of the Adult Education Association (AEA) and the National Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education (NAPCAE). 1200 19th St. NW, Ste. 300, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 429-5131.

andragogy The art and science of teaching adults (in contrast to pedagogy, the art and science of teaching children).

Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) Office of Pennsylvania Department of Education that administers, monitors, and reports on ABE/Literacy/ESL/GED programs using federal and state funds. Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, 333 Market St., Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333, (717) 787-5532.

Bureau of State Library The Commonwealth office that is legally mandated to develop, improve, and coordinate library services and systems to meet the educational, informational, and research needs of citizens of all ages. It administers the AdvancE State Literacy Resource Center.

Commission on Adult Basic Education The national organization for staff of ABE/GED/ESL/Literacy programs, a division of AAACE. Holds annual conference specific to these areas and publishes *Adult Literacy and Basic Education* journal, indexed in ERIC. Contact AAACE for membership information.

community-based adult education Basic educational programs offered through or at community agencies and locations other than public schools.

community-based organization Organization such as community action agencies and literacy councils who receive at least part of their funding from the municipal community and/or private or corporate donations.

competency-based adult education (CBAE) A performance-based process leading to mastery of basic and life skills necessary to function proficiently in society.

Contact Literacy Center Box 81826, Lincoln, NE 68501, (402) 464-0602. Organization promoting communications in the field of functional literacy. Publishes monthly newsletter, *The Written Word*, and provides a literacy hotline, (800) 228-8813.

cross-classify In data analysis, to relate two or more categories simultaneously.

developmentally appropriate Activities geared to a particular stage in a child's mental and physical growth (used in family literacy programs).

distance education Delivery of instruction or information through electronic media in order to circumvent the separation of teacher and learner by distance and/or time.

document literacy The knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in materials that include job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and graphs.

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) National information system which obtains and makes available hard-to-find, often unpublished, information in education. Access through the State Literacy Resource Centers or the Internet.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Program to teach those whose primary language is not English.

EQUAL Educational QUality for Adult Literacy, a statewide program improvement initiative for adult basic and literacy education.

family literacy A holistic approach to short- and long-term literacy development that seeks to address the educational needs of the "whole family," as defined by its members.

GED Testing Service The division of the American Council on Education that develops and distributes the Tests of General Educational Development (see below). One DuPont Circle, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 939-9490.

General Educational Development, Tests of (GED) A series of tests (Writing Skills, Social Studies, Science, Interpreting Literature and the Arts, Mathematics) to demonstrate a competency level equivalent to that of a high school diploma; preparatory programs for the tests. See p.32.

Indicators of Program Quality Definable characteristics of programs used to measure whether programs are successfully recruiting, retaining, and improving the literacy skills of the individuals they serve.

Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy (ISAL) Research unit at the College of Education, The Pennsylvania State University, 248 Calder Way, Rm. 307, University Park, PA 16801. Its goals are 1) research and development, 2) staff development, and 3) leadership in adult literacy. It publishes the free newsletter, *Mosaic: Research Notes on Literacy for Practitioners, Researchers, and Policy Makers*.

Laubach Literacy International Literacy organization whose affiliate literacy programs employ the Laubach methodology. 1320 Jamesville Ave., Box 131, Syracuse, NY 13210, (315) 422-9121.

Learning from Practice Statewide initiative providing opportunities for practitioner research through practitioner inquiry and action research approaches.

literacy The ability to use information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential. This was the definition used as the basis of the National and State Adult Literacy Surveys.

Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) A national organization offering tutor training and instructional materials for volunteer literacy affiliates. 5795 Widewaters Pkwy., Syracuse, NY 13210, (315) 445-8000.

National Affiliation for Literacy Advance (NALA) An association which provides training in the Laubach method of teaching reading to adults.

National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) Headquarters for family literacy program planning and evaluation. Waterfront Plaza, Ste. 200, 325 W. Main St., Louisville, KY 40202-4251, (515) 584-1133.

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) U.S. Department of Education's research and development center for adult learning and literacy. Nichols House, Harvard University Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA 02138, ncsall@hugse1.harvard.edu.

National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL) A research-and-development project for enhancing the knowledge base on adult literacy, established in 1990 at the University of Pennsylvania, 3910 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111, (215) 898-2100, fax (215) 898-9804.

National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education for Limited English Proficient Adults (NCLE) A USDE-funded clearinghouse. Contact Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 429-9292, ext. 200.

National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) Base for a national literacy network as authorized by the National Literacy Act of 1991. 800 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20006-2021, (202) 632-1500.

National Literacy Act Passed in 1991, the 1992-93 amendments to the Federal Adult Education Act.

"new state regulations" Regulations determining structure and direction in areas of curriculum student assessment and staff development as proposed by the Governor and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OICs) Organizations dedicated to the reduction of unemployment and poverty for youth and adults.

Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education (PAACE) The state professional organization representing adult educators and service providers of programs in a variety of settings. P.O. Box 3796, Harrisburg, PA 17105. See p.49.

Private Industry Council (PIC) Local group of community representatives responsible for planning and funding skills training with education monies from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Professional Development System Pennsylvania's regional network of six Professional Development Centers for adult basic and literacy education, operated with Adult Education Act, Section 353 funds under the *Guiding Principles for Professional Development*.

prose literacy The knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts that include editorials, news stories, poems, and fiction.

qualitative data Data that are generally derived from conversations, dialogue journals, and interactions with the client.

quality indicators *See Indicators of Program Quality.*

quantitative data Countable data that are generally derived from forms or questionnaires given to the client.

quantitative literacy The knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, using numbers embedded in printed materials.

Service Delivery Area (SDA) Region, usually a group of counties, serviced by a Private Industry Council.

Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Mandated by the Family Act of 1988, a joint initiative of the Departments of Welfare, Labor and Industry, and Education by which welfare recipients who have barriers to employment receive the education, training, job placement, and support services they need to become gainfully employed.

State Plan A federal-state agreement for carrying out the Adult Education Act.

Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center (WPALRC) One of Pennsylvania's two state literacy resource centers (SLRC). WPALRC, 5347 William Flynn Hwy. Rt. 8, Gibsonia, PA 15044-9644, (800) 446-5607, ext. 216, or (412) 961-0294, fax (412) 443-1310.

workforce literacy General term referring to upgrading of basic skills or job-specific skills of the labor force as a whole.

workplace literacy (or education) Job-specific basic skills training programs designed to provide employees with academic and interpersonal skills at the work site.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

"143"	referring to programs funded under Pennsylvania's Act 143
"322"	referring to programs funded under the federal Adult Education Act, Section 322
"353"	referring to special adult education projects funded under the federal Adult Education Act, Section 353
AAACE	American Association for Adult and Continuing Education
ABE	Adult Basic Education
ABLE	Adult Basic and Literacy Education; Adult Basic Learning Examination
ASE	Adult Secondary Education
BCL	Building Communities for Learning
CAI	computer-assisted instruction
CBAE	competency-based adult education
CBO	community-based organization
COABE	Commission on Adult Basic Education
DAEL	Division of Adult Education and Literacy (U.S. Department of Education)
EQUAL	Educational Quality for Adult Literacy
ERIC	Educational Resources Information Center
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETS	Educational Testing Service
FY	Fiscal Year
GED	General Educational Development (Tests of)
GEDTS	GED Testing Service
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IPQ	Indicators of Program Quality
IRA	International Reading Association
ISAL	Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy (at Penn State University)
LEA	local education agency; language experience approach
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LFP	Learning from Practice
LLI	Laubach Literacy International
LVA	Literacy Volunteers of America
NAASLN	National Association for Adults with Special Needs
NALA	National Affiliation for Literacy Advancement
NALS	National Adult Literacy Survey
NCAL	National Center on Adult Literacy (at University of Pennsylvania)
NCFL	National Center for Family Literacy
NCLE	National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education
NCSALL	National Center for the Study of Adult Literacy and Learning (at Harvard University)
NIFL	National Institute for Literacy
OIC	Opportunities Industrialization Center
PAACE	Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education
PACT	Parent and Child Together time (family literacy)
PDC	Professional Development Center
PDE	Pennsylvania Department of Education
PIC	Private Industry Council
PSCAL	Pennsylvania State Coalition for Adult Literacy
SALS	State Adult Literacy Survey
SCI	State Correctional Institution
SDA	Service Delivery Area
SEA	State Education Agency
SLRC	State Literacy Resource Center
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
TABE	Tests of Adult Basic Education
TALS	Tests of Applied Literacy Skills
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TLC	Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth
USDOE	United States Department of Education
WPALRC	Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center
WRAT	Wide Range Achievement Test

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